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THE PORTENT OF SKIPTON

SKIPTON is a portent. The weatherwise will note it and reshape their policy; it is a portent that demands action.

The Conservative press makes two main points. The first is that the Conservative candidate was too old and uninteresting, and that things will be very different when Mr. Churchill contests a General Election and many Tory candidates are young men in uniform. Secondly, they believe that in a constituency which was more agricultural than industrial the row between Mr. Hudson and the farmers had an important adverse effect on the Conservative vote.

Some, but not much, weight must be given to these points. The votes of a few farmers may have been affected by their quarrel with Mr. Hudson, but in fact the Tory vote was large and the number of farmers who supported Common Wealth cannot have been important. Secondly, if Churchill had been leading the Conservatives in a General Election, then presumably Labour would have also been in the lists, persuading people to vote against, not in favour of, the Conservative candidate. A good official Labour candidate would have collected the votes of Joe Toole and the Common Wealth candidate, and won with a handsome majority.

Skipton gives the lie to the common view that the public is politically apathetic. The small polls in previous by-elections have been largely the result of an absentee electorate and the lack of a clear issue. In this usually placid constituency a small, new party was able to arouse village labourers and mill hands to enthusiasm. Precisely the same thing happened when Miss Honor Balfour contested the seat at Darwen. And these are constituencies in which Common Wealth, which, it is usually assumed, has a predominantly middle-class appeal, could easily be regarded as a mere splinter party. In this case, however, the splinterer was Alderman Joe Toole of Manchester, whose intervention in the election seems to have been generally regarded as no more than an attempt to discredit Common Wealth and divide the progressive vote.

What is the moral? First that Labour and Liberal voters, as a letter from an enthusiastic Common Wealth supporter this week shows, are ready to rally to a clear progressive lead, and that support for the Party truce in the country is almost wholly Conservative. Secondly, that the unattached voters, who decide elections, respond to those who base their case not on purely Party lines, but broadly on a vigorous programme of post-war reconstruction. Thirdly, that the Labour Party will miss its chance if it continues merely to wag the tail of the Coalition donkey, while the Conservatives do precisely what they would have done if there were no Labour Members in the Cabinet.

If we consider the last twelve months of Coalition Government, can we name a single point in which British policy has been effectively influenced by Labour's share in the Coalition? Perhaps a purely Conservative Government would not have introduced Mr. Tomlinson's Bill, but small and useful measures of an eleemosynary nature can proceed as well from Tory democrats as from Trade Unionists. If Labour is to mean anything to the country, and not permit the electorate to assume that all the idealism, all the Socialism, and indeed all the honest intention to carry out any of the promised reforms of our society is now concentrated in Common Wealth and other groups, then the leaders must discard the comforts and emoluments of Coalition in favour of the social struggle in which their followers still believe.

Next, Labour should immediately, while still in the Coalition, make it clear that it has a Socialist programme on which it insists, and on which it is prepared to go to the electorate. It must not remain a passive spectator of its own death. Four or five simple issues already in the public mind should be stated in the most striking and forcible language. These will obviously include a democratic programme for the Continental settlement as well as those main measures of social change which the electors of all parties are aware big business interests behind the Conservative Party intend to frustrate. Why wait for the Tories to produce confusing palliatives? Labour should come out as the champion of public ownership of land and of the other basic resources—power, transport, iron and steel—which cannot be left in private hands if we are to achieve any real reconstruction. If the public is to believe in Labour's sincerity, it must be convinced that Labour is fighting *now* for certain definite measures which, if they are unattainable in a Churchill Coalition, will form its programme in the electoral contests which victory will precipitate.

Finally, those who really intend progressive government in this country should discard the fatal policy of recrimination and division within the Left. They should recognise that Common Wealth would stand an excellent chance in many predominantly middle-class areas which the Labour Party as such is unlikely to win. An agreement should now be made to form a coalition of progressive forces. A general staff should be set up with the task of planning the campaign.

The President's Message

Mr. Roosevelt's Message to Congress is a vigorous, hard-hitting document, all the more effective because it is impersonal. The President makes no complaint against those who have undermined his leadership, but he does assail the complacency and selfishness of the factions and profiteers who have sabotaged the war effort. In concrete terms he recommends four measures bearing on the problem of inflation, fifthly a national service law, and finally a Bill which will enable the troops to vote in the Presidential election. All of these are highly contentious, and most of them have failed, once at least, to pass through Congress. He demands a "realistic" tax bill, aimed at "unreasonable" profits. He wants "to take undue profits out of war" by re-negotiating war contracts. He calls once more for legislation, involving subsidies, which will put a ceiling on food prices. He wants to protect the dollar by re-enacting the Stabilisation Statute. None of these are new measures. The new fact is that he has rallied, after long hesitation, to the idea of a National Service Law, which will make an end of strikes and place workers compulsorily in the appropriate war industry. But he is unwilling to control labour in this drastic way, unless he can also control property—unless, that is to say, the other four measures are adopted. This is, on his part, a bold and risky step, for it has already roused his steadiest supporters, the C.I.O., to opposition. His call for a franchise Bill for soldiers will antagonise his nominal supporters, the Southern Conservative Democrats, since it will effectually confer votes on negroes.

Fascists and Anti-Fascists

At Verona Castle, a building appropriately reminiscent of past Teutonic rule over Italy, Ciano and five other Fascist leaders have been sentenced and shot on the strange charge of having sponsored a motion in a legislative assembly set up by the Fascists themselves. The legal sophistry is not important, nor is the fact that one set of gangsters have executed the leaders of another set. More interesting is the fact that only six out of eighteen men condemned at the trial can at present be found by the Gestapo. As the absentees are well-known men who cannot easily cross frontiers, most of them are presumably still in hiding inside Italy. The Gestapo appears to be no more efficient in suppressing the waves of strikes that are sweeping all through German-occupied Italy. So far the notorious Gen. Zimmermann (Hitler's personal representative in North Italy) and S.S. General Tensfeld (famous for the atrocities committed in Poland) have not succeeded in stopping the workers' agitation. Early in December, Zimmermann himself addressed the workers of Milan and Turin. After the failure of his appeal the Nazis started executing hostages. These atrocities were answered by new and more widespread strikes which affected nearly all Milan's industrial belt and all the big armament and aircraft factories.

Representatives of this anti-Fascist front in Northern and Central Italy are to participate in the Congress called at Bari by the National Front of Liberty for the 28th of this month. Collaboration of the anti-Fascist organisations with the Allies and the Badoglio Government will be fully discussed. The presence of men from German-occupied Italy will impress on the Congress the importance of aiding the Allies to get rid of the Germans, but the extent of their enthusiasm must depend in part at least on the attitude of the liberating Powers. More than two months have elapsed since the Moscow declaration, yet nothing has been done to carry out, for instance, the promise to democratise the Government of Italy "through the introduction of representatives of those sections of the Italian people who have always opposed Fascism."

Mr. Hull Thinks Twice

The State Department has evidently learnt a lesson from recent events in Argentina. Mr. Hull has decided that the Bolivian putsch was inspired by "unfriendly" external forces. Recognition of the new Government, therefore, will presumably be refused. In face of the growth of South American fascist movements based on Buenos Aires, Washington is being forced to reconsider its "good neighbour" policy of recognising all *de facto* Governments capable of maintaining order. Mr. Hull has not reached a point where he considers an outright denunciation of Argentine interference with her neighbours desirable. He is apparently, however, considering means to frustrate Argentine plans for domination of the Latin Americas. The Ramirez Government is bitterly opposed to Pan-American solidarity; it desires the substitution of the *Hispanidad-America* conception, which in present circumstances means little more than an attempt to turn Chile, Bolivia and Paraguay into satellites of the Argentine. And it is no longer possible for Ramirez to disguise the totalitarian nature of his regime. The Socialist newspaper, *La Vanguardia*, is ceasing publication after fifty years, because it finds it impossible to carry on under the new Press decrees. *La Prensa* and *La Nacion*, the two great Buenos Aires dailies, have declared that they intend to fight the new regulations and will continue the great traditions of a free press. But how long can they hold out against a campaign of repression which equals European fascism in its ferocity? Not for long, if help from outside is not forthcoming. If it is true that Britain is considering a further contract for wheat from the Argentine, then we have learnt nothing from the years of appeasement. We must make no compromise with Nazi and Falangist policies in the Western Hemisphere.

The I.C.I. Affair

The charges against Imperial Chemical Industries and Du Pont of violating the American Anti-Trust Laws are none the less important for being an old story. The arguments on which they are based go back forty years; and there have been reference to them in one "trust-busting" campaign after another. Fresh point is given by the allegations that the agreements with I.G. Farben-Industrie have been helpful to the enemy during the present war, because they compel disclosure of the quantities used and the destinations of certain essential war materials covered by licences under patent. The I.C.I. reply to this is that the British Government has known all about these agreements, and that what has been done under them during the war has been done in the light of that knowledge. What Du Ponts answer is we do not know; but it would clearly take a different answer to satisfy the American public. Cartels such as that of which I.C.I. and Du Pont, with I.G. Farben-Industrie, form part raise very wide issues, intimately connected with international problems of patent law. There is a clear need for an international economic agency capable of controlling such arrangements; but as no such agency exists, each country makes ineffective efforts to control what are essentially international problems by purely national means, and on the basis of divergent national economic policies. For our part, we are not inclined to believe that I.C.I. has acted unpatriotically during the war; but we do see grave objections to the uncontrolled power of international combines, which is bound to exist in the absence of effective international controlling agencies acting in the consumers' interests.

The A.F. of L. Says No

The refusal by the American Federation of Labour to participate in the World Trade Union Conference next June would in any circumstances be a serious decision. At the present time it can only be regarded as further evidence of the incapacity of its leaders to face hard facts. Apart from the jealousy and dislike which made them oppose the right of the Congress of Industrial Organisations and the Railway Brotherhoods to send delegates to such a conference, the real trouble arises from their refusal to associate with the Russian unions. Their objection that they are not *bona-fide* trade unions in the normal sense is arguable; but to describe the T.U.C. invitation as "another attempt to smuggle Communists into an international meeting by the cellar door," as Mr. Woll, A.F. of L. vice-president, has done, is ridiculous. The conference is only intended to be exploratory and there is no intention of creating a new executive body for the international trade union movement. If the labour organisations of the United Nations cannot meet even to discuss their common problems, there is little hope that agreement can be reached between their governments in the post-war world. The political associations of some A.F. of L. leaders are not encouraging; it is difficult not to attribute their attitude in part to a desire to cause embarrassment to the Democratic Party in the forthcoming elections. We suspect that their hostility to the Russian unions may be due to deeper political reasons than the formal objections now advanced. The conference is of tremendous importance for international labour and must be held irrespective of the manœuvres of one union group.

The Communists and Democracy

American Communists have for some years been trying to accommodate themselves to the cultural and political tradition of their country. They claim their descent from Jefferson as well as Marx. Their leader, Earl Browder, has continually stressed the need for a realistic approach to domestic problems. The proposal to dissolve the Communist Party and to substitute an educational and propaganda organisation is therefore not very surprising. But the news is striking confirmation of the belief that Communist policy is everywhere entering upon a new phase. It is no isolated example: not only does it endorse the view of this journal that the dissolution of the Communist International was a serious and genuine decision, but it seems the logical conclusion of the "line" of struggle for the defence of basic democratic liberties and national unity against fascism which has been followed more or less by the various Communist parties since 1935. Are we to see a new development of Marxist theory? Proletarian revolution is certainly off the agenda for the time being. United States Communists now talk of a post-war period in which reconstruction will be carried out, as they say, under the system of free enterprise, for the benefit of labour, the farmers and capital without partisan or class advantages. The recently published programme of the Communist Party of France speaks in terms of radical democracy, of the essential freedoms and social security, and throughout Europe Communist influence favours "national front" governments. Perhaps these are regarded as only transitional steps; Fascism, according to this argument, has merely postponed the coming of Socialism in the traditional sense. In any case the present Communist phase offers the chance to put an end to an internecine struggle that has nearly destroyed the Left, and goes far to make unity possible, genuine and fruitful. If Transport House will recognise this fact the future here will look brighter too.

More Schemes: Less Coal

The Mineworkers' Executive has given a hesitant approval to the Government's proposals for a change in the system of coal control. The Mineworkers would have preferred dual control to end, and to have the pits taken over fully by the Government for the war period. They still assert this preference; but as they cannot get the Government to do what they want they recommend giving the Government's plan a trial. This means that there are to be under the regional controllers of production agents responsible to the Government for the management of the various colliery undertakings. In effect, the colliery companies' agents are to be transformed into agents of the Ministry of Fuel and Power, but the management of the individual pits is to remain in the hands of managers employed by, and responsible to, the owners. The mineworkers are opposed to the new disciplinary powers demanded by some of the managers; and on the question of the substitution of "pit bonus" for "district bonus" on output they are prepared to discuss alternative suggestions with the colliery companies. It is beyond understanding by ordinary members of the public that this latter question should have been allowed to remain unsettled month after month. The district bonus has been almost from the beginning an acknowledged failure, and the pit bonus appears to be plain common sense; but the miners for some inscrutable reason have opposed the change, and, despite official decisions in favour of it, nothing happens. We cannot feel any great hope that the revised plan now proposed by the Ministry of Fuel and Power, and recommended for a trial, *faute de mieux*, by the Mineworkers' Executive, will work any better than the numerous schemes which have been adopted over the past two years and have failed to make any practical difference. The coal situation demands, not more changes, but a major operation. The most recent statistics show a further fall in output, due in part to influenza, but not wholly attributable to that cause.

THE FUTURE OF POLAND

POLAND was in 1939 the corner-stone of destiny for Europe: she may again be equally decisive for our fortunes. Then the hereditary feud which has always kept Russians and Poles at enmity enabled Hitler to start his war of conquest with the maximum of advantage for his armies. To-day, while they retreat, it still divides these nations. Marshal Stalin has now given to this intractable problem a turn which eases the task of Western statesmanship. It is a great gain for good feeling that he has offered to accept the Curzon Line as the boundary between the Poland of to-morrow and the Soviet Union. He also extends to this Poland an invitation to enter the alliance against Germany which already links the Czechs with Moscow. He invites the Poles to seek compensation at Germany's expense for the territories they will lose in the Eastern Borderland. What is not so clear is how far these offers are made to "the emigré Government in London," which the Moscow communication criticises in the bluntest words. They are made to "the Poles," and this vague term must be read in the light of what is happening in the disputed territory. Two divisions of Polish troops march with the Russians in the direction of Warsaw, and they accept the political direction of the Moscow Union of Polish Patriots.

The broad meaning of all this is clear. Stalin, who has borne the brunt of the war for more than two years on this Eastern front, regards it as his sphere of interest, in which he is entitled to shape the future settlement. He means to secure once for all a friendly Poland on his flank. He will insist on a Polish Government which cannot be used as a centre of intrigue against him, and if this means in practice dependence on the Soviet Union, he hopes to make this dependence more acceptable to the mass of the Polish nation by endowing it with some spectacular territorial gains in the West and on the shores of the Baltic. It is probable that he discussed this solution with Dr. Benes, who may have urged the wisdom of adopting the Curzon Line. There is no reason to think that Stalin rules out negotiation of the agreement on these lines with the present Polish Government in London; but, to judge by a recent article in *Kolna Polska* (a Polish journal published in Moscow), he will probably insist that any Polish Government re-established in Warsaw must include representatives of the pro-Soviet Polish movement.

London and Washington cannot disinterest themselves from such discussions. The present emigre government, whose personnel is not immune from the laws of change, enjoys their recognition. Poles who own allegiance to this Government are fighting as part of the Allied Forces. It is represented on the governing body of U.N.R.R.A., and will be entitled to receive and distribute the supplies destined for the relief of the Polish population. It happens also, as the presidential election approaches, to command an asset more valuable than diplomatic recognition—the sympathy of the Catholic hierarchy in the United States. How far it has the Polish masses behind it no one can confidently say, but with the representative of the Peasant Party as its premier it has at all events a better standing than the governments of Greece and Yugoslavia.

The problem of frontiers is, in our opinion, secondary, though the Poles have always laid an exaggerated stress on territorial questions. Broadly we think Stalin's proposals for the eastern borderland satisfactory. The line he drew in 1939 ran too far to the west and included within the Soviet Union a biggish triangle of land round Bielgorod which has a Polish population. This he now proposes to restore. The broad belt of territory which he retains ought never to have gone to Poland in 1920. Speaking from our own memories of it, it properly belong to the White Russian and Ukrainian peoples. They were everywhere the population of its villages and on their work it lived. The Polish minority consisted partly of landed gentry, who were rarely on good terms with their peasants, and partly of a small professional class in the towns. The cleavage between the two ran primarily on class lines, but it was reinforced by differences of language and religion. The Poles are Catholics whose faces are turned to the West, and their Latin culture separates them much more decisively than language from the Russians with their Orthodox background. There was a big Jewish minority whose sympathies went at that time to the tolerant Soviet Union. Of this minority only a remnant can have survived the Nazi terror. On balance the population of this territory stands to gain by its absorption in the Soviet Union. The White Russians and Ukrainians will rejoin the bigger masses of the stocks to which they belong and they will enjoy the fullest liberty to use their own languages and foster their culture, which has a marked individuality. The Poles had been harsh masters, who repressed again and again their efforts to organise their agricultural life on a có-operative footing. On the other side of the account it must be said that the more prosperous of these peasants may adjust themselves with difficulty to collective agriculture.

A graver issue is the future that awaits the country which Stalin labels "independent Poland." What is "independence"? The victors of 1918 cast Poland for an impossible role when they called on it to play the part of a buffer State between Germany and Russia. Nature did not design this nearly featureless plain for such a destiny, nor had the Poles either the diplomatic skill or the military efficiency to supply what she denied. At first they leaned on France: then they made a pact with Hitler: finally they became our *protégés*. Nothing in their policy was consistent save their unvarying hostility to Russia, which they justified by a wilful contempt for her power. The logic of their situation was and is that they can hope to enjoy security only if they will think and act as the friends of their great Eastern neighbour. Why would they never do so?

The reasons have their roots in history. Of the three Powers which dismembered them and governed them in the past, Tsarist Russia was incomparably the harshest, nor did she confer on them the incidental benefits of an advanced civilisation that fell to those who came under German and Austrian rule. Every spirited Pole in the old Duchy of Warsaw had graduated in a Russian prison or served a term in Siberia. With this went the antagonism of their Catholic culture first to the Holy Russia of tradition and then to the Godless Russia of the Revolution. No people in Europe is at once so devoutly Catholic and so solidly nationalist as the Poles. When in 1920 Lenin replied to the unprovoked Polish attack on Kiev by marching on Warsaw, he believed that the Polish peasants and workers would desert the landed ruling class and rally to the Red Flag. He was completely mistaken. The Poles saw in Red Russia only a disguise for Imperial Russia, and withstood him to a man.

Stalin's army and diplomacy can now do with ease what Lenin's army was still too poorly armed to achieve. We note, however, that if Poland does in fact take from Germany provinces that are by population indisputably German it will have to rely on the Red Army for security for generations to come. Some assume that the Soviet Union intends to set up a Communist *régime*. We doubt it. On the contrary, Communism, from the days of the Spanish War down to the manifesto of the German Moscow Committee, has ceased to be an article of Soviet export.

Is there anything in this puzzling situation that the Western Powers can do? The first thing to recognise is that Russia is indisputably the predominant Power in the whole of Eastern Europe, from Baltic to Balkans. Any attempt to challenge her ascendancy would only tend to make it more exclusive. Spheres of interest are a bad solution of the problems of international life, and this particular demarcation of interests might be so drawn as to hamper even economic collaboration. The wise course to take is to respect arrangements which Russia deems necessary for her safety, while we strive to keep alive the economic and cultural links between East and West. If the Poles would even now reverse their policy they might be able to build up in Poland a national government as truly their own and in all internal matters as autonomous as that which the Czechs are likely to regain. The Russians, we need hardly say, will retain the sympathy of the progressive West the more surely if they use with restraint the overwhelming military power which their victories have given them.

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HOW NEAR TO HITLER'S MIDNIGHT ?

IN war, if there be evidence that the course of hostilities is failing to produce such reactions in the enemy's ranks as one would reasonably expect, it is high time to look for the missing clue. This problem confronts the Allies to-day. On the Eastern Front the Red Army is punching one gap after another in the overstretched German line; at sea the failure of the loudly heralded 1943 U-boat offensive has been underlined by the loss of the Scharnhorst; destruction by air bombardment spreads from one great German city to another; and, to complete the menacing picture, British and American land forces are avowedly massing for invasion in the West. From the German people these facts cannot be hidden; indeed, Goebbels makes no effort to conceal them. There must be many Germans to-day—not merely those in knowledgeable "inner circles," but the rank and file behind gun or factory bench—who are already convinced that Ludendorff's "dark day" of August 8th, 1918, has come again. Yet this time there is no hint that the High Command is inclined to draw, as Ludendorff did, the defeatist conclusion that Germany must sue for an armistice; there is as yet no evidence of any weakening in the morale or fighting efficiency of German troops; there are no signs even among the Reich's civilian population of the emergence of a "peace at any price" mentality. War-weary, dying wretchedly in the snows of Russia, stunned and homeless in the shambles of their industrial cities, these people fight and work on.

To ascribe this attitude wholly to the influence of the Gestapo is not realistic. In Himmler's Police State repression may eliminate riot and conspiracy; but terror cannot evoke tenacity such as Germany is displaying in the face of mounting disasters. Is the explanation, then, simply that hope in Germany is not yet finally quenched, and that when Goebbels declares, as he did last week, that he bases "certainty of victory on the close merging of our political adroitness and our military resources," he still wins from his audience some measure of credence?

Let us try to consider the outlook as seen through the eyes of a tolerably well-informed German. The military position, he would admit, is grave. Trained reserves are nearly exhausted; the Russian advance, on a widening front, is not yet halted; added to the campaign in Italy, the task of dealing with partisan forces in the Balkans is an exhausting commitment; Roumania and Bulgaria may desert the Axis; the *Luftwaffe* has sunk on all fronts to numerical inferiority; and the Fortress of Europe is garrisoned by a disquietingly high proportion of foreign legionaries—Russians, Poles, Czechs, and so forth—part quislings, part captives press-ganged into Nazi service.

But all need not yet be considered lost. At a price the Eastern Front may still be restored. Given the evacuation, say, of Finland and the Baltic States, there should be enough divisions in the Northern and Central Army Groups to hold strongly a shortened defensive line from Memel to the Carpathians; and, with luck, enough can be saved from the Dnieper Bend and the Crimea to form a protective screen covering the vital Rumanian oilfields—at all events until the coming of spring, with two months' mud and immobility. Then it will be time to make fresh decisions in the light of what Russia's Western Allies have done or appear to be about to do. Meanwhile, despite air bombardment (devastating in many big cities, but not decisive in its effect on German industry, now so largely in the East), the Reich's labour force, supplemented by ten million foreigners, can produce enough war material for strictly defensive operations; less than a score of German divisions seem sufficient to keep General Alexander far from the Brenner; and between other Anglo-American forces and the Continent lie wintry seas breaking on fortified shores.

From such a view of the situation, it will be objected, no intelligent German could derive more than limited encouragement. He must be aware of the Allied announcement that complete agreement on synchronised strategy was reached at Teheran; he must realise that, even if the opening of a Second Front in the West be not timed to coincide with the peak of the Red Army's winter offensive, the respite given by thaw in the East cannot be protracted or, at any time, more than partial; and, assuming a fully developed Multiple Front war, there is ample time next summer for Germany to be overwhelmed.

What scope, then, is there for Germany's combination of military strength and political dexterity to bring about what Goebbels calls "victory," meaning, in fact, a drawn battle? The supposition, entertained at one time by wishful thinkers in London and Washington, that Hitlerite Germany might offer capitulation to the Western Powers on condition of being allowed to function militarily as a rampart against Bolshevism, had never any basis of reality. Such a plan might appeal to a handful of German generals and big industrialists; to ruling Nazi elements, from Hitler down to Gauleiter and Sturmbannführer, it would make nonsense. (Being themselves, as Himmler recently said, the true revolutionaries in contemporary Germany, the Nazis must regard Britain and America as, *politically*, Enemy No. 1, even though the *military* threat from Russia might take priority.) There remains, however, one factor on which German hopes may still rest. It may be argued by many Germans that acceptance by President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill of the unpleasant doctrine that, in terms of lives, the war cannot be won by relatively inexpensive long-range bombing, has come very late in the day; and that belated conversions are frequently half-hearted. Is there not a chance, then, that though it may be impossible to prevent landings in the West, the cost can be made so heavy that the democracies, with further tasks in the Pacific looming large in their minds, will shrink from incurring the casualties entailed in going all-out for conclusive results? And in that event, if General Eisenhower's performance in the West makes no more favourable an impression in Russian eyes than his Mediterranean campaign, is it not conceivable that conditions might arise next autumn in which something better than unconditional surrender could be secured?

A flimsy basis, it will be said, for Goebbels' optimism. We agree. Once begun, the invasion of Europe from the West will gather its own terrible impetus and be supported without stint by all Anglo-American resources in men and materials. Both here and in the United States the public probably underestimates the difficulties and costliness of the undertaking; but, when the time comes, everything will be sacrificed to victory. And though Russia's need to demobilise and reconstruct her ravaged country is pressing, there is no reason to think that Stalin would be likely to make peace with a Germany whose armies were still able to maintain themselves in the field and whose present rulers still lived.

There is, however, a point which emerges from this analysis and which concerns us deeply. For long there has been too much wishful thinking in Britain and the U.S.A., too much over-emphasis on the strategic value of bombing, too much erroneous belief that Germany is on the verge of material and moral collapse, and that, for Hitler, it is already "past midnight." As a result, Allied leadership—relying on superior material resources, disinclined to undertake the effort of political thinking, blind always to the fact that pre-war economic and social systems in Europe have been smashed beyond repair—has neglected grossly the weapon of political warfare. Save in the fleshless platitudes of the Atlantic Charter, the peoples of the Nazi-dominated Continent find no indication of what "liberation," when vouchsafed, is to mean for them. For Germany, in particular, no hint is given of the terms which capitulation would evoke; enemy propaganda is given every chance to argue that unconditional surrender spells national annihilation.

This is the missing factor in Allied strategy. Its absence, we believe, is one of the reasons why Germany is outdoing London in capacity to "take it," why retreating German troops still fight as if they had nothing to gain by saving their lives. As the months of 1944 pass, the last gleams of hopes of a "draw" may well vanish from German minds; the hands of the clock will unmistakably approach midnight. Russian victory in the next two months may conceivably be complete. If not, and if the Allies' political attitude is only calculated to produce among Germans the psychology of a rat in a corner, we risk having to pay a needlessly high price for victory.

LISTENING TO THE B.B.C.

1.—HEARING AND LISTENING

One of the troubles about the planning of wireless programmes is that the planners and the radio critics so seldom listen to the radio; and if they do they so rarely succeed in listening not as professional critics but like ordinary members of the general public.

During the last two and a half months I have been made violently aware of these differences of listening attitude. After being concerned for some three years with radio programmes I have been suddenly compelled by a serious illness to become a genuine radio listener, and I have been amazed to find how different B.B.C. programmes sound. So I have thought it worth while to put down the following impressions while they are still vivid and before they are effaced by return to work.

One of the most obvious, but none the less fundamental discoveries about wireless listening is that it can be divided into two sharply distinguished species. The listener either hears the wireless as a background to some other activity, or he really listens to it with his full attention. Thus the ordinary listener has two entirely different uses for the B.B.C. He either wants it as a background noise to his work, conversation or meals, or he listens to it because the B.B.C. is broadcasting an item which interests him. Thus the B.B.C. performs the functions both of an orchestra in a Lyons' Popular Cafe, and of a serious transmitter of ideas. The first and overwhelming impression I gained by listening to our Home Services—both the so-called Home Service and the Forces programmes—is that the major part of the output is designed merely as background noise or semi-background noise. At least two-thirds of the Forces Programme consists of light music, recordings and low-grade "variety." This sort of noise is not at all intolerable when heard in the factory as a background to the noise of presses (Music While You Work), or in cafes and canteens as a background to the hum of conversation. For there is good and bad background noise. A speech by Hitler or even a new symphony by Stravinsky is extremely bad background; it disturbs instead of soothing, and if by any chance you attend to it for a moment it irritates you by taking your interest off what you are doing. Music While You Work, on the other hand, is a brilliant example of first-rate background noise. It is quite impossible to listen to with your full attention without falling asleep.

I have sometimes asked myself, as I lay in bed, why the B.B.C. devotes about half of its total output for the home public to background noise—noise which is heard by millions but seldom listened to. That American wireless should do so is only rational, for American wireless is based on commercial advertising, and commercial advertising is most successful when it appeals to the semi-conscious or sub-conscious mind. If you pay full attention to a voice advertising a method of preventing body odour you may be put off; but if you have a wireless in your canteen or in your living-room which is constantly providing you with a stream of pleasant background noise, interspersed with background slogans, the effect may be considerable. Background music, in brief, is the perfect sugar for the pill of commercial or political propaganda, as the Germans discovered in the Mediterranean when they put on a programme for British and American troops consisting for the most part of light music and with a very few propaganda news items interspersed.

But why should the B.B.C.—a public non-commercial corporation—devote so much of its time to the licence holders who hear without listening? Is it because its Listener Research tells it that "light music and variety is most popular," without discovering what percentage of those who vote for light music hear it as background noise and what percentage really listen? This would be ridiculous, because the use of the wireless for background noise and the use of it for genuine listening are no more comparable than the music in Lyons' Popular Cafe with a concert in the Albert Hall. No doubt the B.B.C. must fulfil both functions, but popularity should only be measured within each separate category, i.e., which are the most popular background noises and which are the most popular programmes really listened to.

One further point. My own experience in the last ten weeks is that to get the habit of regarding B.B.C. programmes as mere background noise is to destroy most of their value. It is only too easy to get the habit of leaving the wireless on while it is broadcasting a symphony orchestra and you are continuing to read your book. Gradually you find that this habit reduces your power of appreciating serious music. I suspect the same must apply to religious services. Religious people who leave them on as a background noise while they eat their breakfast or read the *News of the World* are not improving their powers of worship.

It is constantly being asserted that the B.B.C. is raising the standard of culture and education in this country by bringing great music, great literature and great drama to the masses. I have no doubt that, broadly speaking, this is true, but one needs to keep a very careful watch to ensure that by bringing symphony music into the kitchen and to the fireside one is not destroying that power of genuine *listening to* which is essential to its appreciation.

I have only one practical suggestion for a method of meeting this difficulty. It is that so long as the B.B.C. devotes only two programmes for the home listener it should sharply distinguish them, keeping, say, the Forces Programme entirely for background noise and devoting the Home Programme entirely to programmes which can only be appreciated if the listener pays attention. This will prove a great convenience, since at present the genuine listener has occasionally to switch over from the Home Programme to the Forces in order to listen to a really worth-while programme. There are not very many of these on the Forces Programme, but a few of them are first rate, such as Radio Reconnaissance. This will have the further advantage that the Forces Programme could be left permanently on in canteens, and without fear that the flow of pleasant background noise may be interrupted by a talk or feature which is bad background noise because it needs listening to.

Similarly the Home Programme might be considerably improved if those who plan and produce it were definitely told that all their programmes were intended for the genuine listener.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

MOSCOW—ANKARA

The author of this article was formerly Ankara correspondent for Scandinavian papers and until 1940 *was London correspondent for the "Istanbul Daily Cumhuriet" (Republique).*

The Turkish Republic is politically and strategically in a difficult situation. Its ambitious President wants to command a seat and vote at the coming peace conference so as to take a leading part in the post-war settlement at least of the Balkans and the Middle East. His plans are already completed. They envisage independence for the Arab countries in detail; but towards any Pan-Arab solution the Turkish attitude is one of reserve, if not of actual hostility. Here the dread of a restored caliphate, this time towards Turkey, and of a Mohammedan theocratic reaction turns the scales. Ankara favours federation—in the Balkans, for instance—on progressive lines of States economically interdependent, but regards the formation of blocks on a religious or racial foundation as disguised imperialism.

All Turkish ideas about the post-war Balkans accord with this principle. The Turkish-Bulgarian frontier is 136 miles, the Turkish-Greek 207 miles long, and President Inonu regards his European-Asiatic country as a Balkan state. With both Greece and Yugoslavia, Ankara has alliances whose obligations remain unfulfilled. They constitute a traditional supplement to the British-Turkish alliance. Even before the Churchill-Roosevelt-Inonu meeting, but as a result of the preceding Cairo Conference between Mr. Eden and M. Menemencoglu, Turkey seems to have passed, at least in spirit, beyond the stage of absolute neutrality adopted hitherto. She scarcely expects to secure, without any sacrifice on her own part, peculiar voting rights in the post-war settlement. Provided the national malady of xenophobia were overcome, the Turks would not be disinclined to face up to the full implications of their alliance with England. When is the psychological moment? This question is already being discussed, partly in secret sessions of the Government and Parliament, partly in newspaper comment.

Caution and mistrust, native to the Turk, hinder an immediate decision. These qualities were strengthened by the Dodecanese mishaps. Since 1912 the Dodecanese, in Italian hands, have constituted a permanent threat to Anatolia. To-day, they are in the stronger hands of Germany and the risk of attack from this quarter has grown. Naturally Hitler is not allowing this relatively favourable moment to slip through his hands. Herr von Papen can whisper in confidence to his personal friend, the Portuguese Minister, that the cession of any Turkish air bases to Great Britain would be answered by an immediate declaration of war on the part of Germany. Inonu's army of about 950,000 men is well trained, but inadequately mechanised, and his air force is small. In short, the Turks shrink from an immediate armed conflict with the Third Reich, which commands the Dodecanese islands and, until the Second Front is opened, could still set free powerful forces against Turkey.

Inonu has solemnly assured the world of his sympathies with the free nations that have suffered invasion. But each time that Turkey hesitates to translate these sympathies into more positive action, the breach between Moscow and Ankara—still existing despite diplomatic courtesies—is widened. Thus *War and the Working-Class* gives the Turks to understand that their neutrality serves only to prolong the war, is postponing the end of Hitler as well as the liberation of Europe (which includes the Balkans) and—last but not least—is costing millions of Russian lives.

Ever since the conclusion of the German-Turkish pact of friendship, which was followed only a few days later by Hitler's attack upon the Soviet Union, Moscow has been filled with bitter feeling towards Ankara. The Russians saw there the breach of a friendship that had already become a tradition between two states of a new pattern—the Soviet and the Kemalist regimes. Russia was the first of the Great Powers to recognise Mustafa Kemal's New Turkey while it was still struggling for its national existence. The Moscow treaty of March, 1921, was a landmark in the struggle for Anatolian freedom. A benevolent Russian neutrality and an absence of danger from the Soviet frontier were two indispensable conditions for Ataturk's Government. Only so could it dare to take on at the same time a war against internal reactionaries and the armies of Greece supported by her Western Allies. The scaffolding of a close political co-operation was then erected. Soviet Russia felt herself isolated and on the defensive; Ankara dreaded some fresh move of an Anglo-French imperialism. Mutual assurances were ceaselessly interchanged between Russia and Turkey that each of the two States saw in the unimpaired continuance of the other guarantees for its own safety. Russian experts had a leading part in the building up of the New Turkey. With their help, Anatolia's important textile works in Kayseri were erected. (These were the only foreign loans accepted by the cautious Turks in two decades.) Not least, Soviet instructors rendered possible the up-to-date training of the Turkish air force. Personal contact was widened by the exchange of delegations. Voroshilov paid an official visit to Turkey. General Inonu, then Prime Minister, was numbered among the confessed admirers of Soviet Russia. He had seen it for himself.

In December, 1925, an agreement was concluded between the two republics, prohibiting participation in aggression, coalitions, alliances or hostile actions of any kind directed against the other partner. In 1929, a very significant clause was added. By it, neither of the contracting partners is permitted to take on obligations in regard to neighbouring countries on land or sea without the assent of the other. The treaty was prolonged in its entirety on several occasions, and finally in 1935 was extended for ten years. In 1936, however, came the Montreux Convention with regard to the Straits. The Turkish view was that Moscow's attitude marked a return to the traditional "mare clausum" principle of Russian policy in the East. This led to some irritation; and later, von Papen sought to reap the fruits of the mistrust that was sown at this time, with his propaganda story about Stalin's ambitions regarding Istanbul and the Dardanelles.

Summarised, the position was this. Russia claimed to have rendered possible the birth of the New Turkey. Ankara had rendered valuable political services in return. For example, the recognition of Bolshevik Russia by the Rumania of Titulescu, at that time of material importance to Moscow, was brought about after long-drawn-out diplomatic preparation on the part of Dr. Rüsü Aras, Ataturk's friend and Foreign Minister. The strong influence exercised by cliques of Tsarist emigrants prevented Yugoslavia from taking a like step, but Ankara's active participation in the Balkan block, whose member states were Turkey, Greece, Rumania and Yugoslavia, resulted in general recognition that the real menace, against which common measures of defence were needed, arose from the dynamically revisionist character of Bulgarian policy. Thus, the Balkan Entente did not become a *cordon sanitaire* as the enemies of the Soviet desired.

Has Stalin forgotten? Does he not see mitigating circumstances in Inonu's decision to conclude in 1941 a pact of friendship with Hitler? Germany was then all powerful, her adversaries still weak and unprepared. Besides, there was the spectre of an enslaved Greece and Yugoslavia. Marshal Stalin is waiting for Turkey to enter the war on the Allies' side. But the Turks still have Goebbels' poison in their blood. As an advance payment of the laurels yet to be earned they would like to see a leading role assured them in the future of the Balkans. The mounting prestige of Soviet Russia is frightening Ankara. For the various partisan armies are coming to look on Russia as their liberator. The Turk is asking himself whether the Moscow that regards a *cordon sanitaire* with disfavour does not itself seek to found another league of states that might be directed against Turkey. On the Moscow wireless Dimitrov is demanding opposition and sabotage in Bulgaria as well as co-operation with the liberation armies of free Yugoslavia and Greece. The Soviet Radio is addressing words of like import to the fighting guerrillas of Albania. Politicians in Ankara are anxious for an assurance that this is not the beginning of a Balkan block under the leadership of Moscow. Could Turkey expect to be accorded in such a block a place that bore any relation to her international prestige? The restoration of the Holy Synod in Moscow could but serve to strengthen such misgivings. For the Orthodox Christians of the deeply religious Balkan countries the Holy Light is again burning in Moscow. Of Russia in a Pan-Slav role Turkey has a deep rooted suspicion. Probably nowhere in the world was Benes' Moscow visit subjected to a more detailed analysis than in Ankara; nowhere are the following sentences from Dimitrov's last *Pravda* article on Bulgaria more dissected that their inner meaning may be elucidated:

> The Russian people who in the past shed their blood for the freedom and independence of the fraternal Bulgarian people and who are now bearing the brunt of the struggle against the historic enemies of the Slavs—the German invaders—have the right to declare that there is a limit to their patience. . . . *Slav kinship, affinity of language*, common culture and common interest in the struggle against the German danger create the basis for inviolable ties between the Russians and the Bulgarians.

When prominent Soviet politicians indulge in this language, the Turks answer by trumpeting the danger of Pan-Slav expansion. But at the same time Moscow is complaining about the anti-Russian attitude taken up by well-known Turkish publicists over the Baltic States and the involved problems of Poland's frontier.

Thus Turkish-Russian relations are still strained. The crux of the difficulty lies in different conceptions of post-war solutions. Turkish fear of being side-tracked or of losing international prestige is matched by the suspicion with which Russia regards a Balkan-Entente centred on Ankara. During the critical summer days of 1939 the then Turkish Foreign Minister, Sarajoglu, travelled to Moscow. He wanted to stop the German-Soviet pact of non-aggression and to bring about an alliance between Russia and the democratic Western Powers. To-day the smoothing of the regrettable differences between Moscow and Ankara constitutes no mean part of the task with which Anglo-American diplomacy is confronted.

A. J. FISCHER

A LONDON DIARY

For three minutes the Brains Trust last week leapt into reality. From an atmosphere of polite persiflage we were suddenly plunged into the heart of a profound controversy. For that reason, of course, we were quickly transferred to safer topics. The question was the appropriate form for war memorials after this war. Joad said that youth was sacrificed in war, and that instead of stone monuments, we should have memorials that meant happiness for the young, and which would give them an opportunity for a more free and adventurous life which had nothing to do with war. He suggested National Parks. This roused Hogg to rude abuse. He was shocked that an "old man" like Joad, who had helped to make this war, etc., should again be suggesting an escapist post-war mood. Other members of the Brains Trust made their suggestions—maternity homes, and others; Joad was not given a chance to reply, and we passed on. Most people who listened would guess that there was past history behind Hogg's violence; some will have recalled that Joad and Hogg were opponents over the "King and Country" resolution at the Oxford Union. Many listeners will have written Hogg off as merely an unbearably rude controversialist; others will have been pleased to hear someone tick off Joad; but if Joad had been able to reply, we might have heard a serious controversial issue properly discussed, and perhaps even have heard the Brains Trust reach a conclusion. Hogg, I take it, fears that we shall all slip back into a merely good time mood; I doubt if he opposes National Parks, and if pressed, I am not sure what he would advocate. He cannot seriously hold that the weakness of British armaments was responsible for the war, as he seemed to suggest, and if we are all to keep armed to the teeth after the war, then presumably he is contemplating another before very long? Similarly Joad would not, I suppose, suggest unilateral disarmament for England unless something has been done to make us secure from aggression. If the discussion had gone on the facts would have forced agreement on some form of international authority and international police force. The best thing now would be to have a B.B.C. debate between Hogg and Joad on this subject.

* * *

The recent appointment of Filippo Naldi as press chief in Naples is an example of the difficulties which keep honest Italians from collaborating with the Allies and Badoglio. During the last war, Naldi became notorious through the disclosure that he was financially linked with the Kaiser's agent Bolo Pasha at the time when he was editing a pacifist newspaper. During the march on Rome, the Fascist squads set on fire the premises of the democratic newspaper *Il Paese*. Naldi bought them cheap and started the ultra-Fascist *Il Nuovo Paese*. (Ciano began his career in this newspaper, as theatre critic.) Naldi was a close friend of Cesare Rossi, Mussolini's general secretary at the Ministry of Interior and one of the chief organisers of the Matteotti murder. Rossi was arrested after the murder under a wave of popular indignation. It was revealed that Matteotti intended to indict the Government for using large sums of public money to finance Fascist newspapers and newspapermen. Then Naldi got scared. He lost his head, tried to shift the responsibility for the murder on Mussolini alone, and finally escaped to France. Anti-Fascist exiles always refused to deal with him. He lived in Paris on business transactions. What possible excuse can the "liberating" Powers have for choosing such a man for a job.

* * *

The *Times* in this war has immensely added to its reputation. It has been sane and balanced and had its own thoughtful point of view. I was therefore surprised to read its leader of last Monday on bombing. There is of course a case to be made for obliteration bombing. It is conceivable that, if ruthless enough, it may make it impossible for a country to carry on through sheer disorganisation. Air-Marshal Harris makes no bones about it; he discusses just how many raids will be necessary to make Berlin and other cities uninhabitable. Sir Archibald Sinclair rubs in the same point when he boasts of how many million Germans are already homeless. I much prefer the straightforward statements of Air-Marshal Harris to the pretence of the *Times* that the only object of this campaign is to lower production and that "in the strict and dispassionate reckoning that is necessary, every bomb is wasted that falls upon civilian dwellings . . ." and so on. Why trouble to contradict the boast of Sir Archibald? The theory is that in a totalitarian regime everything is included in production. If you can destroy working-class dwellings, then you lower production, I have heard it said, even more effectively than if you hit factories which can be quickly repaired. We British ought to realise that we have now adopted a policy of totalitarian bombing which aims at "softening" the whole of Germany. The *Times* says that this bombing is "neither terrorisation nor reprisal." Well, we need not call it that if we object to applying to ourselves words used of Hitler's original attempt to "soften" Britain. But in so far as we are trying to break down morale, the attempt is not to turn people against Hitler, but to demoralise in the sense of reducing Germany to chaos and despair.

* * *

Dr. Carl Mierendorff, Editor of the Socialist daily in Darmstadt, was one of the youngest Social Democrat M.P.s when elected in 1928 in the Reichstag, and soon became one of the most popular among the working classes of Germany because of his courage in challenging the rising power of Hitler. He was arrested in March, 1933, immediately after the Reichstag fire, and kept in various concentration camps for more than five years. The announcement, which states that he was killed during the big raid on Leipzig, last month, appeared in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. It was signed by two of his closest friends. I am sorry we had to kill Mierendorff instead of liberating him.

* * *

The *Journal de Genève*, one of the best informed French-Swiss papers, recently recorded the following incident which occurred in the small French Southern town of Castres at the end of November.

> Four noted German Communists, including a former Reichstag deputy and anti-Fascist writer, had been arrested by the Vichy police, when they were refugees from Germany, and were kept at the disposal of the Gestapo. But before the Gestapo made use of the offer to fetch the four prisoners, troops of French partisans of the Franc-Tireur group appeared one night, got into the weakly guarded prison, liberated and removed the four German inmates. What does that mean? It is very significant. French patriots help at the risk of their own lives enemy nationals, whom they recognise as victims of a common enemy to save them from certain death. This incident gives the best proof of the political maturity of the French resistance movement, which does not regard every German merely as an enemy *boche*, but draws a fine and politically correct distinction between servants of a system and its opponents.

This confirms the reports received from German resistance movements, according to which their members are in close contact with the members of the resistance movements of occupied territories.

* * *

As usual with official visits, the members of the Chinese Goodwill Mission have inspected many factories and spoken at many lunches and been the guests at many large parties. They have been surprised, I think, at the warmth and extent of public interest in China. The incident of the school-child who proudly announced that he knew that the name of the capital of China was Japan, is told as a joke and exception, not as typical of British ignorance. They have had too little time for personal talk and friendship. They are all unusual, interesting people. Wang Shih-chich is General Secretary of the People's Political Council. He is a shrewd, sturdy liberal, who has been extensively tipped as a possible Chinese Foreign Secretary. Han Li-wu is the Director of Administration for the Boxer Fund and Secretary of the Sino-British Cultural Association. He has had more to do with cultural relations between the two countries than anyone else during the last ten years. Lei Wen-kuo is an up and coming young Chinese diplomat, who has been one of the Generalissimo's secretaries. Wang Yun-wu is genial manager and editor of the Commercial Press of China. He is full of ideas and likes to tell you that he publishes a book a day. Wen Yuan-ning was Professor of English Literature at the University of Peking, is a member of the Legislative Council and is a specialist in Milton. In many ways the most interesting of the party is Hu Lin, who is the editor of the *Ta Kung Pao*, the most independent and influential of Chinese papers. He gives me a great impression of strength and originality. He first knew Europe when he came over as representative of his paper at the Peace Conference at Versailles, and became a Press Attaché to the delegation (which included the present Ambassador to Britain, and which, it is too often forgotten, refused to sign the Versailles Treaty). It is an interesting and indeed a first-class mission, but it suffers from one defect. It is too official. I hope for much more frequent interchanges of British and Chinese, and though I do not hope to meet better company than I have in this mission, I should like to think that we were going to entertain Chinese who were not already so friendly to us on their arrival, and who come from sections of the Chinese community which are less directly in contact with Chungking.

* * *

People who used to collect Shavianisms are now equally delighted with Winstoniana. But whereas Shaw's remarks were never private, many of Churchill's have to be given new twists of phrase or circumstance to pass the test of security. Many of them depend partly on pronunciation. The man who pronounces Gestapo as if it were spelt Jēstapo in order to please the English, is capable of deliberately talking French as if it were English. Here is the latest question: When and to whom did Mr. Churchill say, "*si vous continuez m'obstructer je vous liquidaterai*"? CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Hannen Swaffer.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

EDUCATIONAL

IF UNDECIDED what to do, leave it to God. Should you find this difficult, some helpful individual guidance is obtainable by post, from 2s., from Grant, Psychologist, Burley, Hants.

Advt. in *Peace News*.

Sir Oliver Leese's appointment to command the Eighth Army makes our Mediterranean war an Eton and Harrow affair.—*Evening Standard*.

Recently she has become interested in poetry, particularly Shelley and Keats, and can recite the Ode to a Grecian Urn with the same feeling she puts into "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas."—*Daily Express*.

When a man was charged at Belfast Police Court to-day with attempted suicide, it was stated that he had tried to gas himself after he had heard Dr. Joad express the view in a "Brains Trust" broadcast that it was a man's privilege to commit suicide if he found life unendurable.

The Stipendiary, Mr. J. H. Campbell, K.C., remanding the man, said: "Surely there is no sense in paying heed to Joad."—*Birmingham Mail*.

WHITED SEPULCHRE

"Mr. Roosevelt does not favour Geneva as the seat of a future League because of the aura of failure overhanging that city."—*Reported interview with the President of the U.S.*

THE sepulchre was whited, its outside fair and clean,
But everything within those walls was morally obscene,
And round the Mausoleum clings a kind of charnel smell,
No whitewash can eliminate nor time itself dispel.

To sessions at Geneva the Nations came in crowds—
Great Powers wore off-white surplices, weak Members donned their shrouds;
Some gathered there to be betrayed and others to betray,
And all without was righteousness and all within decay.

When accusations reached their ears from immolated lands
The Council called for water, the Assembly washed its hands—
Greece, Vilna, Abyssinia, Manchukuo, Spain, Corfu,
These will not be forgiven them for what they did they knew.

And when from Europe's ashes the nations rise once more
To frame another Covenant to stop another War,
Wherever on the Continent this Phœnix-League may light,
It must avoid for evermore that inauspicious site,

And in Geneva's Palace lies that execrated wraith
With all its sanctimonious fraud and tale of broken faith;
Though pious resurrectionists would roll away the stones,
It is a whited sepulchre and full of dead men's bones.

SAGITTARIUS

KAJ MUNK

[This tribute to Kaj Munk, Danish playwright and leader of resistance, is contributed by Mr. Christmas Møller, former leader of the Danish Conservative Party in Denmark, and now Chairman of the Danish Council in London.]

IT is rare that a poet from a small country achieves the fame that is due to him. Only the very greatest, like Hans Andersen and Henrik Ibsen, become world famous. But even great poets from small countries bear to some extent the stamp of their time and country.

Kaj Munk's fate was in no way different, though in a sense his poetic genius was international in its scope. He was a clergyman and a poet. In the tiny parish of the West of Jutland he was the shepherd of the flock, and to the city of millions he was the leading dramatist of the Theatre Royal, but his spiritual calling was probably the mainspring of his nature. Through his poems, his dramas, and as a publicist he was before the war the castigator of his people, and as a dramatist he achieved greatness. He lashed out against us for our materialism, and his poetic creations were saturated with the eternal truths of the Christian faith.

He was perhaps not an instinctive democrat; but, from the time of its first appearance, Hitlerism and Nazism made it clear to him that everything evil comes from tyranny, and in his dramas he became the expounder of eternal values. Before the war he was a symbol of strife, a symbol which spelt division and dissension as a true poet should do.

After the outbreak of war he interpreted Danish national resistance through his poetry. He sacrificed his rich talents in the struggle against the Germans who had once again, as in the fourteenth century, become masters of the country. He revived Danish history and told it to the people, so that they understood that they would have to fight the Germans as in days gone by.

To him human life and the universe had become very plain and free from complications. You must choose between God and the devil, between God and Hitler, as he himself put it. As for himself, he had made his choice.

And he led his religious and poetic life in accordance with his inmost convictions. To his mother country he gave everything, and he gave it fighting. And when the Germans or their henchmen in a dastardly fashion murdered Denmark's great patriot and her greatest poet, they knew well what they were doing. They murdered a burning soul, striving to reach the highest values.

But the people's soul they cannot kill—and through his martyrdom Kaj Munk will inspire the Danish people to resist the invader even more stubbornly and, together with all the other oppressed peoples, to tread the road that leads to victory.

CHRISTMAS MØLLER

THE MOVIES

"San Demetrio London," at the Regal

"Welcome To Britain," M.O.I.

As one who rated *In Which We Serve* honourably but rather low, I shan't rush in now to proclaim that *San Demetrio London* is "better than Coward." True it is, as I see films, more truthful, more moving and more continuously agreeable to the eye; but after all it grows out of another tradition. Coward's big moments were of the stage; so, too, were those quarter-deck addresses and the famous oil-streaked features bobbing up and down in the waters. He was trying, and up to a point successfully, to be very English; and the merit of the film was that despite all its shop-window reticence (the film has since "stormed" America as *Mrs. Miniver* did here), *In Which We Serve* embraced more of reality than others of its kind. *San Demetrio London*, on the other hand, is a product of the documentary method, that method of looking for drama in the facts and not outside them which has so greatly increased its scope since the war. It is no longer content to make a study, but tells a story; it confronts the feature film on its own ground. The story of *San Demetrio London* is both dramatic and typical of many such heroic episodes of the Atlantic which leak out in newspaper interviews. This tanker, returning from America in a convoy, sees the *Jervis Bay* go down and is herself set on fire and abandoned. One boat-load of survivors drifts for days before sighting a ship that doesn't respond to signals—the *San Demetrio!* Though still ablaze, incredibly is hasn't blown up, and the skeleton crew set to work to repair her and make a course eastward. They limp home, and our last glimpse of these merchant seamen, whom we have got to know very well, is in a court-room where they are awarded salvage-money richly earned. Heroic tale, and the understatement here takes the form of the closest possible adherence to the facts. How they were struck, how they rowed in an empty ocean, how they got the boat going again, how one man died and was slid overboard under a Union Jack; this is a film narrative that really comes out of the national temperament, though we ourselves may be slow nowadays to recognise it. Ealing Studios, which produced *Nine Men*, is responsible; Charles Frend directs.

The other film on my list, though it can't yet be seen, is shown to every American soldier landing in England and has the official blessing of the M.O.I. Tells, in a very lively and endearing manner, the best way for Americans to take the English. Pub etiquette, the rations problem, scars of the Blitz, English grouchiness and hopes for future: a brilliant little elucidation of character, with Burgess Meredith interpreting the good and the bad American, and Bob Hope and Beatrice Lillie at their dazzling best. There aren't so many friendly and helpful films about that we can afford to have this one buried in the files of the American War Office.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Contemporary English Pictures, at the Redfern Gallery.

A particularly stimulating and enjoyable show—Paul Nash, John Piper, Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland, Robin Ironside, Christopher Ironside. These six artists, however distinct in style, have something in common. They are most easily called Romantics, because they are all consciously concerned with other than purely plastic qualities. The best of their works possess the rhythmical virtue that Roger Fry justly considered the essential of a painting and to which Mr. Clive Bell gave the name "significant form." But they reveal also the excitement roused in the artist's imagination by dramatic, picturesque or disquieting material. When Mr. Nash notes the similarity between the trace of an airplane in the sky and the curve of a loose rope, he is interested in something more than the repeated pattern these provide. He would be a surrealist if he did not resolutely refuse to exploit the sensation of disgust. Mr. Sutherland, on the other hand, is so fascinated by the organic forms he discovers in landscape that his trees sometimes are disturbingly suggestive of human bodies. Mr. Piper, different again, resembles the painters of the early nineteenth century in his taste for the straightforward picturesque—rocks and waterfalls and ruins. Mr. Moore, led by a sculptor's natural taste for drapery, uses a classical rather than a Gothic idiom, but adapts it to a powerfully dramatic or disquieting purpose. Mr. Robin Ironside's drawings are a curious cross between those of Mr. Rex Whistler and of M. Tchiletcheff. Mr. Christopher Ironside translates a vision akin to Mr. Piper's into vaguer and more watery watercolours. To deplore the "literary" interest of these artists would be puritanical: the more gifted of them gain by their imaginative approach, the less gifted would probably do no better if they concentrated only on design. Mr. Nash, sometimes too rectilinear, is at his best in the fine picture, *Mineral Objects*. Mr. Piper is at his best when most faithful to the thing seen: his *Wiltshire Landscape* here is deeply poetic. Two of the Sutherlands are among his best pictures, Nos. 12 and 13. No other living English artist, except Miss Frances Hodgkins, has such originality in colour, and his design, if less certain, is always personal and exciting; but his work is difficult to approach, because his response to nature is essentially mystical. Mr. Moore's drawings, on the other hand, are easy to enjoy, much more so than his sculpture. Mr. Christopher Ironside has sensibility and fluency, but he will have to discipline his hand if he is ever to attain the intensity that we look for no less in romantic than in classical art.

Correspondence

SKIPTON

SIR,—The by-election in the Skipton Division last week, when the Common Wealth candidate just scraped home, has shown beyond all shadow of doubt that the common people are utterly tired of the maladjustment and inequalities of our present system; that they can be awakened out of their lethargy to record a vote for a Progressive who holds out the prospect of a new way of life, and they want to make clear their determination to win the peace as well as the war.

When we arrived to work for the Common Wealth candidate in the division we were told quite frankly, even by people who supported us, that we didn't stand an earthly chance. There is an old saying in the constituency that if they put up a pig, and tie a blue ribbon round its neck, it will get in in the Dales. We were fighting against terrific odds, a hopelessly out-of-date register, the intervention of a vote-splitting third candidate, and the dead weight of an adverse Tory press.

I was sub-agent in Barnoldswick. Scarcely anyone in that little town had ever heard of Common Wealth, but as they slowly understood that we were fighting for a better and a fairer way of life, and honestly did not care about our future as a political party so long as the urgent needs of the people were satisfied, they rallied round us. The people in Barnoldswick, more than in most places, suffered hell after the last war; the mills were closed, unemployment was on a gigantic scale, the folk were really hungry and utterly wretched. The standard of living there always has been low. In ordinary times of peace it is customary for most of the women to get married and go straight back to the mill and work for the rest of their lives, with intervals away for rearing a family. They spend their evenings washing, cleaning and cooking, after being at the mill all day. They don't even imagine a better sort of life; they accept conditions stoically as being inevitable. These ordinary townspeople were ready immediately to respond to the ideals for which Common Wealth stands. Conspicuous as a stranger, I was soon known all over the town, and every day people stopped me in the streets and said: "Good luck!—I hope you get in—we want a change—it's about time something was done for the people." The majority of them were not politically minded at all, only deeply conscious that far-reaching changes in the present system are essential.

Our struggle seemed to put fresh life and hope into individual members of the Labour Party, who deplored the present trend of things both at home and abroad, but because of the political truce could do nothing about it. They could not come out officially and support us on our platforms; as individuals they gave all the help in their power. At the beginning of our campaign many were hostile and suspicious, but this attitude quickly changed when they realised that the main purpose of Common Wealth is to combine all progressive parties and not to divide. It was most enheartening to realise that we were putting fresh hope and courage into the cause for the people. Some of the older Labour members told us that our ideas and enthusiasm reminded them of the good old days of Keir Hardie and the early Fabians.

May I end with an appeal to all progressive parties of the Left to combine and sink their minor differences? By so doing I am certain we could sweep this country along a growing tide of Socialism towards our goal of a fair and equal chance for all, that we could throw off the oppressive capitalist yoke from the already over-burdened shoulders of the masses. We must unite, work and fight with all our power for the ideals in which we believe, and it is so absolutely vital that we begin now, before it is too late.

Jo Bailey

Farleigh End, Farleigh Common,
Warlingham, Surrey.

C. R. ATTLEE

Sir,—I am provoked to challenge Critic's sneering references to C. R. Attlee.

He says "*reading* his broadcast *afterwards* I saw that though he had not committed himself, he had *in effect* displayed a hope that the Coalition Government would continue after the war." He then proceeds by a tortuous argument to the unwarranted and mournful conclusion that Attlee "could not help being a half-hearted and defeatist leader of Labour if an election on party lines actually comes." Surely never in the pages of the New Statesman was more rickety logic built on thinner ground.

This attitude to C. R. Attlee we find regularly in all the Tory journals. It is disappointing to find it in the New Statesman. Isn't it rather funny that the Parliamentary Labour Party, year after year, honours this "flat," "worthy," "bromide," "half-hearted," "defeatist" Attlee by unanimous re-election to their leadership, and that, too, in a Party, whatever its weaknesses, very quick to resent any half-heartedness or defeatism in its leaders? May it not be that Critic is thinking of leadership in terms that are now out of date?

There are deeper aspects of this problem, but may I conclude by quoting the opinion of one of the shrewdest and most thoughtful back-benchers that Labour ever had, the late George Hardie of Springburn. Discussing some of the House of Commons personalities of that time, 1936, I asked George Hardie whom the Labour Party, given power, could put in the place of Eden, then at the zenith of his popularity. His reply came like a flash, "Clem Attlee." When asked what about the Premiership, he replied with prophetic fervour, "The most important job in world politics just now is the British Foreign Secretaryship and there's only one man in the Labour Party big enough for that job—Clem Attlee."

92, Mossgiel Road,
Newlands, Glasgow, S.3. James Walker

[Critic writes: "Sneering is far from my intention. I like and respect Attlee. He has almost all the virtues —as I have often testified—except that of leadership. And that he should be *leader* of the Labour Party in the coming crucial period seems to me and, I think, to most serious students of politics, simply disastrous.—Ed., *N.S.&N.*]

MR. HUDSON AND THE FARMERS

Sir,—Your views upon the dispute between Mr. Hudson and the farmers do not seem to be characterised with your usual clarity and impartiality, and neglect entirely one aspect of the dispute which some of us think the most important. This is whether there is any justification for the allegation that there has been a breach of faith. The farmers assumed that when the pledge was given "that prices will be subject to adjustments to the extent of any substantial change in cost of production" it meant just exactly what it said. If Mr. Hudson, faced with a changed situation, had said so frankly and asked for a release to the extent required, I have no doubt he would have been met in a different spirit. Farmers hate legalistic twists, particularly in business deals, and have always had some suspicion that the history of the industry after the last war would be repeated when convenient to the politicians. Whether Mr. Hudson has the economic right of the case or not he has made a bad psychological mistake, and matters are not mended by the fact that he has only recently become an amateur farmer.

Farm costs should never be based on one or two years, and the "evidence," which you seem to think the Inland Revenue now has, cannot possibly be "precise." It was announced in the House that 104,000 farmers now paid income tax on a Schedule "D" basis, that is, they had to prepare accounts for the department. But this means that probably 200,000 small farmers are still paying income tax on Schedule "B" basis, and of the costs of production and rates of profits on such smallholdings little can be known, as they are not required to show accounts. Furthermore, we have been blessed with an unusual succession of good all-round harvests, another factor which shows the folly of assessing profits on one or two years' records. Accurate cost accounting on all types and sizes of holdings over a series of years, including good, bad and indifferent harvests, is an obvious necessity as a safeguard for all concerned, and should be undertaken with the full co-operation of the National Farmers' Union. Until this is done do not let any of us delude ourselves that we have "precise information about the profits of agriculture." I do not believe that such information exists except in discontinuous and piecemeal form.

Henry Stubbings

Walter's Farm,
Galleywood, Chelmsford.

REFUGEES IN UNIFORM

Sir,—Mr. J. Geta's letter raises an issue which many M.P.s feel to be urgent; witness the repeated questions in Parliament to the Home Secretary. On

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DENT

Oct. 13th, Miss Rathbone put the case very accurately when she asked: "Could not some assurance be given to aliens who are serving in the Armed Forces and yet are quite uncertain as to whether, after the war is over, they will not be bundled out of this country? If they are good enough to serve in the British or Allied Forces, are they not good enough for naturalisation?"

This very understandable anxiety as to their future is causing some Pioneers to refrain from volunteering for "more combatant" units; all the more as overseas service for former German nationals is still attended by special risks in the event of capture, which are by no means wholly eliminated by the change of name now permitted. It is all the more a remarkable sign of devotion to our common cause that such large numbers of aliens have responded to Sir J. Grigg's opening of "all arms" to them in March, 1943.

The Home Secretary's negative attitude seems all the more strange as the Canadian, like the American, Government is giving naturalisation to German refugees who join the Forces. Some of these were actually among the internees deported from this country to Canada in 1940. An alien Pioneer has written to me:

> I was interned in May, 1940, with many more thousands of innocent people. On July 3rd, hundreds of us were deported to Canada. We were told there was no chance of release. Then in November Mr. Patterson from the Home Office arrived, and asked for volunteers to return to England and join the Army. We had to sign papers relieving the Government of all responsibility if something should happen to us on the way back. Many were so disgusted with the treatment they had received that they would not return.
>
> Numbers of these very men have now been released in Canada, and have joined the Canadian Army (only *volunteers* are sent overseas). They apply for naturalisation, and many receive it. Scotland Yard has sufficient time to deal with *their* applications—why not then with *ours* who joined up years ago, returned to help Britain when things looked black, and who are pro-British to the bone?

Another ex-Pioneer preparing to go overseas gives voice to the general view when he writes:

> The case is particularly strong for all those men who have been transferred from the Pioneer Corps. They may be a relatively small number, but they have already been handpicked, sifted, tested by all means at the Army's and the Government's disposal, and their good record is thus already established.

But the Home Secretary apparently thinks it necessary to do the "handpicking" all over again! And he objects that his office has no time for it. This is the one argument stated so far, and it is contradicted by the fact that only last year naturalisation was *offered* to all French nationals in H.M. Forces. The position is all the more hard for those soldiers now going overseas who have been "handpicked" for us by Hitler himself in the sufferings they endured in German concentration camps. One cannot in fact feel surprised at the somewhat bitter note in Mr. Geta's letter. Why should we thus alienate our best friends?

Dorothy F. Buxton

Whingate, Peaslake, Surrey.

THE SUDETENS

Sir,—Mr. Karel Vivary's plea for the mass expulsion of the Sudeten Germans is based on a false assumption. It would take up too much of your valuable space to go fully into this extremely complicated question, but when Mr. Vivary contends that the Sudeten Germans "embraced National Socialism freely and with an overwhelming majority," he is contradicted by no less an authority than the present Minister of State, Dr. Hubert Ripka, who in his book, *Munich, Before and After*, states:

> It may be argued that Henlein's Sudeten German Party received the majority of the Sudeten German votes in the parliamentary elections of 1935 and even more in the municipal elections held in the spring of 1938, but the results on both occasions would certainly have been less favourable for Henlein if the Czechoslovak authorities had taken more effective measures against the physical and psychological terrorisation of the Sudeten German masses which was exercised by Henlein's agitators, vigorously supported in every way by propaganda from Germany. The Czechoslovak authorities could, and should, have countered this, not only by enforcing the law against terrorisation, but also by widespread and effective support of the anti-Nazi elements, who always constituted at least one-third of the Sudeten population. Czechoslovak democracy deserves blame for having failed in the main to do these things.

The real test is, however, not an election held in a state of mass excitement, but Henlein's attempted revolt in September, 1938, which according to Ripka's testimony in the same book, had "received no active support from the majority of the Sudeten Germans." This disposes, I think, of Mr. Vivary's peremptory statement that the Sudeten Germans, should full citizenship be restored to them, "would remain a disruptive element."

Robert Wiener

3, The Grove, N.W.11

HOOVER RELIEF

Sir,—As a postscript to H. N. Brailsford's article on Hoover relief and class war, may I recall once more Marthe Huysmans' remark to the Hoover emissaries who arrived in Helsinki during the first Finnish-Russian war.

There were two of them, doctors, I believe, come to see if the Finns needed medical aid. And how ignorant they were! They had never heard of the Trueta closed plaster treatment of fractures! One buttonholed me and told me what a truly remarkable man Mr. Hoover was—only anxious to see who needed help. His eulogies were interrupted by a press attaché.

"Dr. X, allow me to introduce you to Mme. Huysmans."

"How do you do, Dr. X," said Marthe. "I've been waiting to meet you for a very long time. I waited for you for two whole years in Spain!"

Apparently Mr. Hoover never discovered that Italian and German bombs could really hurt Spanish peasants, for no Hoover mercy expedition ever set out for Barcelona or Madrid.

John Langdon-Davies

Bowmans,
Burwash.

BANKS AND TRADE UNIONS

Sir,—I have been very interested to read in your current issue the reference to the non-recognition of trade unions by the Joint Stock Banks and a few other stragglers in this matter.

I would like to make clear to your readers that of the big banks, Barclays Bank Ltd. does recognise the Bank Officers' Guild, the trade union of bank staffs in England and Wales. We have recognition from some other banking institutions. However, there is no doubt whatever that the industry as a whole is a straggler in this matter, and it is to be hoped that the Minister of Labour will not allow this position to persist in the few industries where it does, particularly as a dispute on recognition is not one which is covered by the National Arbitration Order. I need not emphasise the seriousness of the lack of machinery to settle disputes on this matter.

Bank Officers' Guild,
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BOOKS IN GENERAL

A Victorian School by R. St. C. Talboys, (*Blackwell. 12s. 6d.*) is a history of Wellington College. One knows from experience what to expect of such a book—the past depicted with the sentimentality of a hagiologist, the present with the impudence of a company promoter. Mr. Talboys, though he was successively boy and master at Wellington, wonderfully disappoints these expectations; and his book deserves careful attention. He commands a highly urbane style, which, as quickly becomes apparent, reflects the refinement and polite values of a humanist. Though the book may be considered an official history, it is not uncritical. Probably the picture makes a more unflattering effect than the author intended. An inverted Balaam, he may disconcert some of the more boyish Old Boys but the outsider will gain from it a respect for Wellington. There must be much good in a school that inspires with unmistakable piety so civilised an author.

Wellington, like Eton and Winchester, was founded as a charitable institution. To celebrate the Duke's memory, a fund of £160,000 was raised "for the gratuitous, or nearly gratuitous, education of orphan children of indigent and meritorious officers of the Army." The Wellesley family were indignant. They wanted a fine monument to the Duke set up in every considerable English town: "And you can fancy what our feelings were when it was all going to be lumped together and a Charity School built with it, where scrubby little orphans would be maintained and educated." Fortunately for the Wellesleys the first headmaster never intended to govern a mere Charity School. Edward White Benson made Wellington a great Public School, in which the *heroum filii* survived as only a nucleus. The Prince Consort wanted a military *Kadettenanstalt* on German lines, and the boys were put into an odd dark green uniform with brass buttons and a cap like a postman's. But when Lord Salisbury's son went in this attire to meet the Governors at the station, they gave him their tickets. The uniform disappeared. The story of the chapel is no less significant. The College was built by a skilful but obscure architect called John Shaw in a style which, Mr. Talboys says, has been described variously as Louis Quinze and Franco-Flemish. Mid-Victorian Louis Quatorze would, I think, be a juster description, and it would be one of the best buildings of the Fifties, if the horrible brick were given a coat of paint. The Prince Consort, it seems, had chosen this style in preference to the fashionable Gothic, because he desired to avoid "the monastic associations," and Shaw had designed a chapel in the same idiom. But Benson was an enthusiastic Goth, and Sir Gilbert Scott tacked on to the College an Early English edifice no more decent (though slightly more spirited) than the Bodleian wing with which his grandson has astonished Oxford.

Benson was a formidable fellow, or he could not have overruled Prince Albert. Even his own children were terrified of him; to the children of others he was as awful as the Great I Am.

> His voice was deep and musical, his conversation eager and imaginative, his gestures regal and sometimes dramatic. His wrath was terrible! There were moments when, wrapping his gown about him, he faced the School, as Elisha may have turned to face the children who mocked him from the forest. The boys stirred uneasily; they dreaded these occasions. The more sensitive of the masters dissolved in tears. . . .

Though Mr. Talboys is too tactful to say so, Benson was a famous flogger. In the nineteenth century a schoolmaster's faith in Jesus seems only to have whetted his appetite for flagellation. It provided perhaps an outlet for passionate temperaments to which marital fidelity might otherwise have proved difficult. Benson was offered in 1869 the headmastership of Rugby, which he refused, not without praising himself for making what he called "Cophetua's choice." But three years later he was invited to become Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral. There was no more talk of Cophetua, and eleven years later he became Archbishop of Canterbury.

The history of a school is most conveniently divided into reigns, though a headmaster, like a monarch, may neither encourage nor approve the changes that mark the period of his nominal sway. Dr. Wickham, who succeeded Benson, was "silent, gentle, unobtrusive, a fastidious scholar of rare accomplishment," but he saw Wellington submerged by the gross Philistinism that was then becoming the pride of English Public Schools. In 1893 he was succeeded by the more appropriate Dr. Pollock, who made himself "a fabulous figure, a Grey Eminence, mysterious, invulnerable against the importunity of masters and the encroachment of boys." His staff, it appears, cowered visibly at his approach, but he won the liking of the Prefects and the Sixth. He was by inclination a courtier: "Royal pages appeared in the dormitories, and the sons of diplomats and cadets from noble families sought entry into our houses. Princesses drove over and took tea at the Lodge quite informally." The orphanage had now attained not only affluence but a tradition of its own.

In 1910 Dr. Vaughan arrived to fortify the austerity of this tradition. He was not so much a fine scholar or an imaginative teacher as a great organiser. He highly valued "the homespun virtues"; he was slow to praise; and his wrath was a whirlwind. He had derived from Rugby "his intense earnestness, a lack of humour and a certain mistrust of the graces," says Mr. Talboys. Yet he had the advantage of being married to a lady who was agreeably inconsequential and who was always talking about Beauty. (She was a daughter of John Addington Symonds. Whether Dr. Vaughan's attitude to schoolboy romances was softened by the teaching and example of his father-in-law remains obscure). In 1919 Vaughan was translated to Rugby, and the next in this succession of legendary figures seems to have been less imposing. Mr. Malim, it is true, combined an antipathy towards any expressed emotion with a certain precision of speech and an austerity of public manner, but "he modified his prejudices and wisely yielded to the School a graduated measure of liberty such as it had not enjoyed before." Something of a decline, one fears. Rather than treat boys as potentially humane, a Benson would have read the Commination Service and fled to the Thebaid, or to Windsor. But worse was to come. In 1937 Robert Longden became headmaster. Young and vital, a scholar and an aesthete, a rebel against accepted notions, he possessed a gift for instant and intuitive contact alike with ordinary individuals and with the school. I wish Mr. Talboys had enlarged on his reforms. The government by fear that turns boys into Yahoos became a thing of the past. Wellington was now in the van. It promised to become the most civilised school in England. But in October 1940 a bomb fell on the college. One may suppose that Benson had used his archiepiscopal influence in Heaven, for Robert Longden was killed. With this disaster Mr. Talboys ends his history. The character of the present headmaster is not described, and we are not told whether he is trying to put Humpty-Dumpty together again or whether he continues the policy that was giving Wellington so high a reputation.

Or is there one faint hint? Mr. Talboys shows how limited in this large school was the range of possible social life. A boy could frequent only boys of his own age and in his own house; and it might easily happen that none of these ten or twelve boys had tastes or characters congenial with his. As a distinguished Wellingtonian, Mr. Harold Nicolson puts it, "the authorities, in their desire to deprive us of all occasions for illicit intercourse deprived us of all occasions for any intercourse at all." Only within recent memory, Mr. Talboys explains, have these conditions been wisely modified "by the freedom given to the older boys to visit each others' dormitories or houses, a freedom which, one hopes, is now enjoyed without restraint." "*One hopes*"? I may be shockingly suspicious, but if I were thinking of sending a boy to Wellington I should make certain that Mr. Talboys's hopes were not unfounded. For on such small things a boy's happiness may too easily depend. In a school that really aimed at preparing boys for adult life, such restrictions would be inconceivable.

Mr. Talboys throughout the book shows where his own sympathies lie. He writes for instance about the masters of the Seventies and Eighties:

> I think that their motive force lay in a kind of eager exuberance, which, supported by Christian convictions, exalted "character" above all other values. Dr. Wickham was, in a sense, ahead of them, and far nearer to the vision of our time in that he stressed the trained intelligence, the humanism of the mind, as a primary factor in an education towards humanity. Yet for many years the victory was with the character builders, and perhaps it still is. The spearheads of their cause were the Prefect system and the prestige of physical prowess. For what happened here, as elsewhere, was exactly what might have been anticipated, and was by some desired. School discipline was diverted from the training of scholars to that of sportsmen and athletes; and it was to the latter that the power and the plums of school life were given. Boys of mental ability and secondary physique could rarely hope for admission to the ruling caste and to whatever advantages responsibility or leadership might give them.

This tyranny of toughs was a curious ideal for schoolmasters "supported by Christian convictions." At my own public school the Christian virtues were despised and rejected with a vigour that even in retrospect astonishes me. It is odd also that such a system should have developed in the England of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury, for it anticipated many Fascist practices and ideals, not only government by toughs but a contempt for women, a lust for corporal punishment, a hatred of the intellect, and a pride in intolerance. If war is to be the normal occupation of a country, there is something to be said for the unmitigated Public School system no less than for Fascism. Its failure has been in educating men for the labours and enjoyments of peace. Even if not miserable, one was bored and therefore dulled. Mr. Harold Nicolson, for instance, "entered Wellington as a puzzled baby, and left it as a puzzled child." What wonder if he confesses to feeling neither affection nor gratitude towards his old school? Yet most of us who loathed our Public Schools learnt there one lesson very necessary to every boy bred in an amiable home: we learnt that if we did not stand up for ourselves, nobody would stand up for us. If the ruling class in this country remains powerful whether for good or for evil, it is largely because it has been toughened at school by a severity of discipline such as few members of the proletariat apart from Guardsmen have had the privilege of undergoing.

I must not end this notice of Mr. Talboys's book without a tribute to his final paragraph, in which he gives a delicious and gently sardonic picture of the Wellington "type," and expresses the wish that he could for one week share their rude recreations. This passage might have come from the pen of Max Beerbohm, and deserves a place in future anthologies of English prose. I have quoted several of Mr. Talboys's criticisms, and too few of his commendations. He says, for instance, that a particularly friendly relationship between masters and boys has always distinguished Wellington. But that so evidently gifted and civilised a man as Mr. Talboys should have happily devoted many years to teaching at Wellington is an even more persuasive tribute to the school than any of the explicit praise he offers to it. Lot could not find ten righteous men in the City of the Plain, but on the small staff of a Public School there have usually been two or three counterparts of Mr. Talboys, whom the least pious of Old Boys remember with profound gratitude and affection.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

FROM THE RUSSIAN

A Book of Russian Verse. Translated by various hands and edited by C. M. Bowra. *Macmillan.* 8s. 6d.

If I knew even a little Russian, I might be tempted—such are the pitfalls of reviewing—to try the high-hat attitude. It isn't hard, with a little backing. One poem would be too literal, the rhymes in another would betray the translator's putty, too much this and not enough of that; nothing, of course, from Golubchik, but on the whole the editor has done his work well, etc., etc. Such a review—what a pleasure it would be to write!

Another time, perhaps. With *A Book of Russian Verse* the reviewer must be content to start level with the reader. Mr. Bowra's name is an assurance; his introduction tells one all that an introduction should; and the book itself turns out to be a pearl among collections. This is for me, as no doubt it will be for many readers, unexplored country, and I can advance into it with avidity and an open mind. A few hints from the introduction keep one critically alert. Of all European languages, except Greek, Russian is the most fitted for poetry. (This we must take on trust.) "Though . . . Pushkin and Lermontov lived lives at least as romantic as Byron's, and were both killed in duels, their poetry is more straightforward and more truthful than his. Exaggeration, rhetoric, unfettered fancy, histrionic gestures are not in the Russian tradition. . . . It prefers the quiet phrase, the understatement, the precise, significant word." (In the first twenty-four pages, devoted to Pushkin, we discover the truth of this, and discover also that Russian poetry has not been over-influenced, like our own poetry, by the Classics and the Bible.) Pushkin "combines the best qualities of the eighteenth century with the best of the Romantic Revival." (No comparable poet in English.) "Russian poetry is penetrated by the Russian landscape. . . . It is content to see and to enjoy nature as it is, as something apart from man and even from God. Nor is it the unusual in nature that normally attracts Russian poets." Huge, sometimes empty landscapes, morning and evening, swallows, the harvest, snow, thunder, the spring thaw, clouds scurrying overhead. In contrast to this, human nature is presented with a variety and depth that seem extraordinarily modern. (Hardy and Browning may come to mind.) Finally, the love of Russia—Russian landscape, Russian people and the Russian destiny—is expressed by nearly all these poets; and this love, rather than emotion springing from any creed, verges on the mystical.

Such are the main points of Mr. Bowra's introduction. Re-read, after we have spontaneously enjoyed the poems a number of times, it proves to be both lucid and remarkably complete. There are few poetrys about which similar generalisations would be useful, but the hundred years of Russian poetry are knit together by a character that seems barely deflected by Western influences. Byronism and Symbolism, for example, are terms commonly applied to the poetry written at the beginning and at the end of the century. But Pushkin shows very little trace of the Romantic grief, Blok is far from being a Symbolist in the usual sense; they have, indeed, far more in common together than the one, say, with Byron, or the other with Mallarmé or Valéry. Even Lermontov's poetry—as distinct from his prose fiction—though exquisite and subtle, is devoid of attitude. Self-pity, one of the main props of the Russian character, seems almost completely absent from their poetry. What can be the explanation? Hard to say, except perhaps that the inspiration of the language favours popular and national themes. A language so "superbly fitted to poetry" (to quote Mr. Bowra again) must make its own demands and reticences.

Style, in the sense of individual protest, rarely obtrudes: an effect emphasised, no doubt, by translation. Without losing sight of the originals, one learns to distinguish here between translators, between a Maurice Baring and a Maurice Bowra; for these two are largely responsible for the character of the volume. Mr. Baring's Pushkin:

> . . . O Ruler of my days! Ward off from me
> The evil angel of despondency
> And sloth; and let not from my lips be heard
> The sharp repeating of the idle word;
> Save me from lust, that snake which lives within;
> And let me not be blind to my own sin,
> Blind to my brother's trespass let me be,
> Quicken the spirit of consent in me,
> Of love, long-suffering and of chastity.

Many of these versions by Mr. Baring have the value of original poems. Mr. Bowra makes himself felt more by his choice of poem and by a sensitiveness to modern content. Besides editing *A Book of Russian Verse* he has provided the bulk of the translations—filled in the gaps, as he so modestly puts it. These are the last two verses from his "Take not away my wits, O God!" (Pushkin):

> . . . The curse is, if you lose your sense,
> They shun you like a pestilence,
>   And all your ways are tied.
> They'll chain you to a madman's yoke,
> And through the prison-bars provoke
>   You like a beast inside.
> No more in darkness shall I hear
> The nightingale's voice ringing clear
>   Oer the black woodland's strains,
> But only comrades' shrieks of fright,
> And keepers' curses in the night,
>   And screams, and clank of chains.

And other translators of Pushkin, less skilfully, provide other facets. R. M. Hewitt's "Remembrances," for example, seems to reflect a wonderful poem, but unmemorably.

Perhaps the individual triumph of the whole collection is the anonymous version of Lermontov's *Dream*, which I must quote in full:

> By hot noon, in a vale of Dargestan,
> Lifeless, a bullet in my breast, I lay;
> Smoke rose from a deep wound, and my blood ran
> Out of me, drop by drop, and ebbed away.
>
> I lay upon the burning sand alone.
> Sheer precipices crowded all around.
> Their yellow tops were scorching in the sand,
> And I scorched too in death's sleep, on the ground.
>
> I dreamed a dream, and saw the glittering hours
> Of evening gaiety in my own place;
> And there young women, garlanded with flowers,
> Held talk of me in words of happy grace.
>
> But in that happy talk not joining, one
> Sat far apart, and sunk in thought she seemed;
> And oh!—the cause is known to God alone—
> This was the sad dream that her young soul dreamed.
>
> She dreamed she saw a vale in Dargestan . . .
> There on the slope a well-known body lay;
> Smoke rose from a black wound, and the blood ran
> In cold streams out of it, and ebbed away.

The reader will be able to make his own discoveries in *A Book of Russian Verse*. It is remarkable, as few such books are, both for the portrait it gives of Russia and for a delight which rarely has the appearance of being second-hand. Occasionally one reads with half an eye on prophecy and the present, and at the end Mayakovsky comes swinging in with a new tune. Otherwise, it is the old Russia, warm-hearted, grim, dilapidated, subtle, and simple, with indefinable strands leading towards the new.

G. W. Stonier

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A REFORMED GUERRILLA

No Outspan. By Deneys Reitz. *Faber and Faber.* 15s.

The capacity to write warmly, naturally and well about their lives is not common among public men. They are dictaphones without pulse, and their autobiographies taste like the lees and sediment of their oratory. It is not surprising: public life too often numbs the gift of intimacy and leaves a deadening aftermath. Perhaps another explanation is that, in England, public life is too busy and well-regulated; the tang and freshness of Mr. Deneys Reitz, Deputy Prime Minister of South Africa and now High Commissioner, spring from the life of a more loosely knit country, of more violent contrasts than our own. Thousands of miles to fly, hundreds of miles to trek; not grouse to shoot, but lions; not sullen constituents to address in the English drizzle, but cantankerous farmers with riot in their eyes and all the stored-up fire of isolation in veld, in forest and mountain, ready for release—those are some of the elements of the life of a politician like Mr. Deneys Reitz. He belongs to that remarkable group of men who, under Botha and Smuts, have enjoyed the struggle of living at peace with Britain. Where our public men are sedentary and professional, the South African of Mr. Deneys Reitz's kind brings the good temper and the animal spirits of the traveller, hunter, fighter, the physically active man. When one reads his accounts of the native races, their chieftains and their history, the stories of the droughts, the floods, the gluts and the famines, one sees how much more simply and crudely nature comes into the South African political scene. The mind of the educated man cannot become sicklied in such an environment; though one can see, as Mr. Deneys Reitz suggests in his many tolerant comments on South African politics, that political sectarianism may become a pastime, as religious dispute has done in the Tennessee creeks.

Among the writers, as Mr. William Plomer showed recently in his remarkable autobiography, the wildness of the country excites the visual sense. Perhaps that is why one reads Mr. Deneys Reitz: because he has the hunter's eye and an immediate response to adventure. I have picked out two passages, one showing the politician, the other the adventurer at work, and they perfectly illustrate Mr. Reitz's temperament. He is describing the settlements in the Lower Reaches of the Orange River:

> On the islands towards the coast are European settlements, and there was something like civil war among the irrigators owing to quarrels in respect of distribution of water in the canals and furrows. I found them nursing shot guns and rifles across their knees as they fiercely eyed each other from opposite sides of the sluice gates, and it cost me days of difficult negotiation before the factions came to some kind of agreement . . . I had operated in these parts as a Boer guerilla nearly twenty years before.

Farther down the Orange River are the little-known Aughrabis Falls. They are among the highest in the world. The river narrows down to a granite gate only 15 yards wide and its huge waters then plunge 500 feet sheer into a gorge. The descent to the bottom of the gorge is terrifying, but Mr. Deneys Reitz made it:

> From the falls the torrent came racing down towards us in an angry flood throwing up great waves and eddying wildly. But I watched the driftwood and I noticed that some of the logs slowed down at a certain point and even started to float upstream again. From this I concluded that the water, probably due to submerged rocks, was taking a rotary movement and that for all its frightening aspect, the gorge was not as dangerous as it seemed, and I decided to make a test.
>
> I stripped and dived in, and it was as I thought, for there was something of an upstream current and I was able to make headway. I was tossed and buffeted a good deal, and at times there was a sensation of remoteness from the outside world; for on either side the walls of the mighty canyon stood so high that but a strip of blue sky showed, making one feel a mere speck in the waste of waters.

Eventually he got to a cavern behind the fall where the water came over with such force that it set up a downward current of air like a ventilator in a mineshaft.

A great deal of the book is given to such moments of escape from official business. He has a lot to say about lion hunting. He travelled all over the Union, seeing the native chieftains, hearing their tribal histories. On South African politics he is the good-natured man who confesses to have been as big a bigot as any in the political conflict between Hertzog and Smuts. The root of the trouble in South African politics, he thinks, is not hostility but individualism.

> For nearly three centuries the Afrikaans speaking community have been individualists, roving the interior, far from constituted authority, every man a law unto himself, and to this day they resent discipline and ordered rule.

There is an extraordinary account of Hertzog's defeat on the question of neutrality at the beginning of the war, an account which illustrates the blind spot in an individualism so intense. He compares the South African psychology with the Irish; but when he went to enlarge the mind of De Valera with the comparison, he found the Irish doctrinaire less amenable than the blunt sectaries of his native land. The doctrine of predestination has, oddly enough, been a great energiser of its followers.

V. S. Pritchett

AN ENGLISH MONASTERY

Canterbury Cathedral Priory. (Cambridge Studies in Economic History.) By R. A. L. Smith. *Cambridge University Press.* 15s.

"The economic side of medieval monasticism," wrote Eileen Power, "has been done from a wrong angle; what is wanted, is 'straight' economic history." The present study by an old pupil would have satisfied her demand. It is a clear, objective account of the farming and finances of one of the largest and wealthiest of the English monasteries; it is based on a long and intelligent sifting of the rich material that has lain for six centuries at Canterbury, and it carefully avoids all archaeological and ethical digressions. Economic theses are often dull to tears; it is the peculiar merit of this book that it brings light and order out of density without false simplification; the trees are there in plenty and in variety, but the size and shape of the wood can be clearly seen.

The Golden Age of the capitalist wool and corn trades, so Power and Postan have taught us, reached its climax about 1300–20. In the twelfth century, the monastic landowners had found it best to lease out demesne and even whole manors, and let others look after the land; later, direct exploitation became profitable; they called in the leases, reclaimed and bought land, and farmed for the market on the grand scale. This is the high-light of Mr. Smith's book, and he has had the fortune to excavate a man who embodied and controlled the spirit of the age. Under Henry of Eastry, prior of Christ Church for the record period of near forty-seven years, the whole fabric of estate management and finance was overhauled in the interests of production and sales. A great corporation, with manors scattered over a variety of soils and situations, was able when intelligently directed to rationalise the whole *bloc* for the market. The typical text-book manor, a self-contained cell of exploitation, was broken down; where the yield of bushels per acre was high, more land was put under plough; where pastures were rich, land was kept for stock and the dairy herd; cows and ewes were concentrated from afar for the short milking and cheese-making season; sheep were driven to the downs and marshes for summer cropping and taken back in autumn to be folded on the arable. Seed corn was exchanged between manor and manor; the greatest possible weight of grain went to market in a zone of high prices, and domestic needs were met by buying cheap.

The whole of this economy was controlled by the prior as chairman of a finance committee sitting in the exchequer at Canterbury. They audited all accounts, budgeted for each manor a year ahead, sanctioned expenditure and directed the high farming by a series of rulings. With receipts rising, it was worth sinking capital in the land; fields were drained and marled, farm buildings went up everywhere. In his first thirty-seven years Eastry had put back into the land a sum equivalent, perhaps, to £150,000 of our money. He could afford it, for gross receipts rose 25 per cent. in his day; the net increase was larger still.

Eastry's achievement fills only a part of the book, which covers the centuries from Becket to the Dissolution. There is much else of value, for it is a pioneer work in its field, and a model for future studies of the kind; a rare example of research laying bare a great and living organism.

Mr. Smith gives as frontispiece the great Bell Harry Tower; he does not, I think, expressly mention that its name perpetuates that of dry, masterful old Henry of Eastry.

David Knowles

INSPIRATION OR COMMON SENSE?

Fables, Parables and Plots. By W. J. Turner. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 7s. 6d.

The publishers of this book, Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode, are a firm of which the live wire is said to be a well-known and brilliant writer and controversialist. On the wrapper of Mr. Turner's latest work we are told that "into these fables Mr. Turner has woven philosophy, criticism, poetry and ridicule." That seems to me to be a very fair and a very true summarised account of *Fables, Parables and Plots*.

On reading this book, divided into twenty chapters with an average of six pages to a chapter, I felt that here was one of the best collections of paradoxes, of leg-pulling, of wit, and of fundamental wisdom that I had ever come across. Take some of the titles: "The Man Who Saved Pumpelsdrop"; "Propaganda"; "The Archbishop"; "Education, or The Daughters of Titania"; "The Wealth Distributors"; "The Listener"; and "Death Comes to the Doctor"; whilst the final chapter, "Spring Festival," is one which nobody but a philosopher imbued with the essence of poetry could have written. Few readers will be able to extract more than a tithe of the true implications of any one of these chapters—much fewer of all the chapters. Yet the simplest and the subtlest, the extravert and the introvert, the most complacent and the most modest, will get something from every section of this unusual book.

For example, let us consider the fable with which the book opens, "The Man Who Saved Pumpelsdrop." This little market town is the principal shopping centre of a large agricultural area. The farmers, fruit-growers, and other producers in this area have not been prosperous for a long time owing to a succession of poor harvests and low prices. Pumpelsdrop consequently suffers considerably. Very little traffic passes through it. It is not a tourist centre. Certainly you can call at Pumpelsdrop by making a slight detour on the way from north to south or from east to west, but it is not on the direct route anywhere. It has a railway which conveys considerable quantities of agricultural produce in good times, and Pumpelsdrop is then a large buyer from distant industrial centres, and imports most of the amenities of civilised life. When farmers were prosperous, a lot of money was spent in the town. As a result it possesses luxury shops of a quality that might cause any casual traveller to wonder how such an insignificant town could support such excellent shops. These shops, however, have been carrying on only a hand-to-mouth trade for a couple of years and are in the trough of a depression when on the 5th of December, 193—, an unexpected event happens. Prosperity in the town and gaiety in the country around it are brought about by the action of a "lunatic" who has escaped from the local asylum. I will not spoil sport by telling more of the story. That is Mr. Turner's job, and he has done it splendidly. Any one of the other stories might have been selected as an example. The remaining nineteen Fables and Parables, though different, are comparable—some being stronger in one aspect, others in other aspects. HARRY ROBERTS

La Guerre des Cinq Continents. By the Military Critic of *La France Libre.* With a Preface by "Strategicus". *Hamish Hamilton.* *3s. 6d.*

The articles collected together in this book have been written at various times between the dark days of November, 1940, and the brighter times of May, 1943. They are in no sense a history of the war, but a series of analyses of the situation at the times when they were written, and, as such, all the more valuable because of the continuity of thought and method used in their composition.

The author's main interest is strategy, and his sound knowledge of national psychologies, industrial development, and the "logistics" of war provide a firm background against which he analyses the relative importance, functions and interdependence of sea-power, air-power and land forces. The world-battleground is dissected in accordance with the distribution and character of the centres of production, armed bases, oceans requiring carrier-borne air-power, narrow seas controllable by land-based aircraft, and land theatres of operations. When we come to tactics, the relative merits and methods and changes of method of employment of armour, artillery and infantry; of bomber, fighter-bomber and fighter aircraft; of capital ships, aircraft-carriers and submarines; of merchant shipping, railways and motor transport, are discussed in relation to the operations which had taken place or were impending at the time of writing.

The result is a series of broad pictures of the military situation in the widest sense, as seen in strategic perspective at intervals during the past three years, which are as instructive as they are interesting, particularly as many of the author's speculations have subsequently been verified by events. For instance, in September, 1942, the possibilities of the Russian counter-offensive at Stalingrad were clearly foreseen.

Out of the mass of communiqués and press despatches with which the world has been deluged, the author has distilled a strategic essence of which he endeavours to demonstrate the significance. The military art is not an exact science, and the number of variables involved makes impossible any pretence at infallibility of prediction. But, in spite of these difficulties, military criticism is probably better able to approximate to the truth than many other forms of assessment of human endeavour, such as art or musical criticism. Among military critics, the author of this book must be held to occupy a high place. We are not out of the wood yet, and in forming an appreciation of how we have got to where we now stand, a perusal of his interpretations of the situations which have led up to the present is both instructive and comforting. For without ever abandoning himself to the optative, he has based his argument throughout on objective reasoning: and if there were solid grounds for hope when he began to write his studies, they are now incomparably firmer. We look forward to the continuation of these articles.

Week-end Competitions

No. 728

Set by G. W. Stonier

A not very good novelist sits down in the year A.D. 2000 to write a novel of England in the 1940's. He or she puts in plenty of local colour, most of it wrong. The usual prizes are offered for the best extract, of not more than 250 words, from this imaginary work.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, January 24th.
2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 724

Set by Roger Marvell

Prizes of Four Guineas are offered for the best extracts of not more than 250 words from a sequel to *Mansfield Park*, in which Mrs. Norris brings a present to Fanny on the first Christmas after her marriage.

Report by Roger Marvell

F.C.C. points out that there was no routine giving of Christmas presents in Miss Austen's time. I can add a further objection. Mrs. Norris is said to have left the Mansfield Park neighbourhood "for ever." Yet if Miss Austen had written a sequel she could hardly have surrendered one of her most dazzling inventions. The Edmund Bertrams, we are told, were able to occupy the Mansfield parsonage some time after their marriage just when they needed a larger income. I like to suppose that Fanny rapidly had twins and that she had already moved to the Parsonage the first Christmas after her marriage. All competitors assumed that Mrs. Norris would remain not only stingy and self-complacent but offensively condescending to Fanny. Is it not possible that her dislike of Fanny (which I share) would be concealed by flattery, especially if Tom's health became worse? In any case an entry on these lines would have been amusing. Many of the competitors are so level in merit as to make prize-giving painfully invidious. I recommend that the prize be divided between Barbara Blackburn, R. J. P. Hewison, F. C. C., Margaretta Bennett and Simkin. I offer my apologies to the hardly less skilful Nan, Allan M. Laing, Joan Mawer, U. K. Moore, William Bliss, Sybil Prinsicy, A. R. Watson and G. D. S.

SEQUEL TO "MANSFIELD PARK"

Fanny was almost disagreeably surprised when her Aunt Norris was announced, but her natural sweetness and the complaisance formed by years of submission at Mansfield had bloomed, under the influence of marriage with a truly respectable man, into a conscious agreeability of temper, and she welcomed her aunt kindly. That lady began the conference. She was come to wish Mrs. Bertram (with a look full of meaning) joy of her marriage. Not that Fanny was in looks, indeed she absolutely had a fagged air, from which, and the large fire, her aunt could but conclude her to be quite knocked up by the cares of keeping house in a situation so much above any her birth and fortune could have pretended to.

"To the point, however.—I bring a gift suitable to the festive season. Had I known the roads to Thornton Lacey were so noisy, I had sent it by coachman. But, however, I was never one to grudge inconvenience, and indeed I made it (as poor ill-used Maria could tell) entirely myself at considerable trouble, not to mention the expense, though it cost me (or rather Sir Thomas, for I saw the bill myself) more than I care to think of."

So saying, she produced a kettle-holder in the form of a parrot, the green baize of which strikingly recalled that curtain which had gone off to her cottage when the ill-advised Mansfield theatricals were brought to so abrupt a catastrophe.

R. J. P. HEWISON

"I find my Aunt much changed, Fanny," said Edmund. "I cannot but value her sincere attach-

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ment to my unhappy sister. She speaks so properly too of my Father's goodness in permitting their recent removal to a distant part of our own country. Altogether ——." Here he was interrupted by Mrs. Norris's entrance, followed by the manservant carrying two small fruit-trees. "You see I have not forgot your tastes, Fanny," she cried; "I have brought you two very good pear trees, which I begged from my neighbour's gardener. However, our present garden is so small, the soil so poor—in short you are to have them for your orchard." She paused for thanks, which being forthcoming, she continued: "I told your poor cousin, who delights in this fruit, that I was sure you would not grudge her a few pears when they ripen. To be sure," moving to the window, "You have so many trees that I daresay you would not miss the whole crop of these and would be quite glad to pack them all into a hamper each year for James coachman to bring us when he visits his mother. Upon my word it would not be at all a bad idea if you were to rid yourselves of surplus garden stuff several times a year in this way. I assure you it is the greatest misfortune for your cousin to be without fresh fruit and flowers." "I do not find my Aunt so greatly changed, Edmund," remarked Fanny, later. MARGARETTA BENNETT

Edmund met his Aunt at the bottom of the hill. "Well, if you must insist," said she, handing him her basket, "I warn you it is heavy, but then I never consider myself. It contains a little something for Fanny. I was at the Hall yesterday, and they would absolutely press these jars of quince upon me. And you know at Christmas we should always remember one another. So both are doing well, I hear, though Fanny is still upstairs. You know Edmund, we must not coddle our little Fanny. I said from the first: What Fanny needs is plenty of exercise and occupation, otherwise she will mope. Fanny must always remember that but for me—." "Why, my dear Aunt," exclaimed Edmund hastily, "I perceive something soft here, that is certainly no preserve!" "Ah, now you have forestalled me!" cried she. "Here is my prime treasure—a quilt for the cradle. Blue for a boy, you see! Blue satin on either side. You will not find such satin nowadays. I made it from ——. But indeed Edmund, I fancy you have not much pleasure in recollecting your little theatrical venture. I was against it from the first, as I told your father. And then, when he so wisely ——. But you are actually smiling! Poor Mr. Rushworth! Yes, I believe the material may, in the first instance, have been intended for the Count's cloak."

F. C. C.

Lady Bertram's handsome present brought tears to Fanny's eyes.

"I am glad you like it, my dear. I told Sir Thomas that I thought it hardly good enough."

Mrs. Norris, however, had no such scruples about the second-hand infant's cap she produced from her reticule, observing that the cap would be all the more valued by Fanny since it had belonged to her dear cousins.

Fanny expressed her thanks.

"I have no wish to be thanked. To be sure I treasured a memento of the *happier* past. Such dear, sweet-tempered infants! One does not see their like to-day."

Fanny, ashamed of her own emotion at the comparison, feared to look at her Aunt Bertram, who might be even more unpleasantly affected by it. Lady Bertram, however, was struck by a different thought.

"You had the cap then, sister? I know I asked Chapman a dozen times where the infants' clothes from the press had gone. I meant Fanny to have them all. I was sure Chapman had taken them for her niece. But now I know it was you, sister, I can be comfortable."

Edmund now entering, was shown the trophy by Fanny.

"What is it?"

"It is a cap, Edmund."

"Indeed?"

Mrs. Norris observed in a whisper to Fanny, that one could not expect gentlemen to take an interest in such things.

"Your Aunt Norris must have had it by her these twenty years," said Lady Bertram.

Mrs. Norris, reddening, dwelt on the value of old lace. BARBARA BLACKBURN

"I have been at considerable pains in chusing this, and you may well wonder that I should bring anything, since it is but six months since the wedding, when I am sure I did my part. I had thoughts of my silver soup-ladle; it is no use to me—I cannot give large dinners!—and in perfect repair—I think, Edmund, you have never seen it—but it would only lie idle, for I imagine that during the next dozen years or so Fanny will be too busy with her nursery to think of giving dinners. Besides, I daresay you have one. I suppose that there is not another young married woman of no fortune in all England who lives in such comfort as Fanny enjoys at Thornton Lacey. However, I flatter myself I have hit on the very article. Here is some baize, some of that excellent green baize which Sir Thomas so very kindly gave me. I contrived the shaping of my bed-hangings so cleverly that there were several very sizeable pieces left over, which will be just what Fanny requires when she comes to patching the hassocks."

Fanny and Edmund having expressed their gratification at this example of foresight, Mrs. Norris concluded:

"What particularly pleases me is, that my gift will be equally serviceable to you both. You see, Fanny, what can be done by taking pains." SIMKIN

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 725

Set by Raymond Mortimer

Prizes to the value of Four Guineas are offered for clerihews on dishes, e.g. cottage pie or homard à l'Américaine.

Report by Raymond Mortimer

Still faint from the struggle to escape permanent sepulture beneath a pyramid of clerihews, I award the first prize of 18*s*. to Nicolas Bentley—a startling instance of hereditary genius. The rest of the prize-money to be divided between I. C. Saul, Hardy Amies, Salopiensis, Leslie Johnson, Allan M. Laing, F. C. C. and Little Billee.

Chicken à la King
Used to be quite the thing,
But monarchy decays so fast
I've given it up at last.

Roast beef and Yorkshire pud.
I used to think jolly good.
Now I think it beastly
Because of J. B. Priestley.

I'd rather worship Mammon
With cucumber and salmon
Than reverence God
With boiled cod.

Bring me a lot
Of saumon fumée en cocotte.
Failing the saumon fumée,
Cocotte will do me.

NICOLAS BENTLEY

I do not give a button
For roast mutton,
But bestow my belly's benison
On venison. . . .

Dixit Lucullus:
"Acipenser, rhombus, mullus
Mihi maximae deliciae: pavonem
Viliori ventri donem. . . ."

Quand on prend du bouillon
Il ne faut faire aucun son;
Et il faut aussi qu'on sache
Boire sans s'arroser la moustache. . . .

I. C. SAUL

For duck and green peas
You can wear what you please
But you really must dress
For canard à la presse.

I am
Devoted to ham
With, of course,
Cumberland sauce.

A gigot of mutton
Should have a button
Of garlic placed neat
Where the meat is most sweet.

Why is chicken wing
Such a rare thing?
I always get a piece
Of cuisse.

To-day I fight shy
Of Suprême de Volaille;
It has a habit
Of being rabbit.

HARDY AMIES

For Good Friday.
Salmon
Delights Mammon.
Cod
God.

Not Too French!
Lady Bracknell held Œufs à la Diable
To be quite "convenable."
But Œufs en Cocotte
Not.

Viennese Steak
Is nothing but a fake.
Dreadful!
Breadful!

John Bunyan's
Liking for Tripe and Onions
Seemed a trifle plebeian
To the author of "Marius the Epicurean."

SALOPIENSIS

Although the caviare on toast
Smells fishy to most,
It is, all the same,
Roes by another name.

For sausage and mash
I never had much of a pash,
And the substitution of soya
Leaves me even coya.

Blanquette de veau
Is what Cook calls it, although
I rank it
As just stewed blanket.

LESLIE JOHNSON

Twice a week there was Boiled Beef and Carrots
In Wimpole Street, at the Barretts':
"Doctor's orders!" said Pa
To Ba.

Young Art. Kipps
May have eaten fish-and-chips,
But imagine Eliza Bennet's chap
With a paperful in his lap!

Gandhi has been known to refrain
From Homard à l'Américaine
In favour of a little bowl of nice
Rice.

ALLAN M. LAING

An apple dumpling,
With pastry so crisp that it's crumpling,
And one fat apple inside
Fills me with patriotic pride.

Though English apple tart
Is also very near to my heart,
With pastry criss-crossed and brown
And its egg-cup, upside down.

Semolina mould
(As it used to follow cold beef) leaves me more than cold.
Married dons are perfectly right
To dine in hall on every Sunday night.

F. C. C.

"I'd like a Roast Suckling,"
Said Charles Lamb, chuckling,
"But I'm sadly afraid
That my fire insurance premium isn't paid!"

"Bring me a Devilled Kidney!"
Cried Sir Philip Sidney,
"For in that line
No one's need is greater than mine!"

"Chops and Tomato Sauce?
I'll miss that course!
For it turns me," said Mr. Samuel Pickwick,
"Sick quick."

LITTLE BILLEE

How good is bouillabaisse
When épicée, épaisse !
(Thackeray must have made a packet
In the advertising racket !)

I hope, before my demise,
To sample nègres en chemise.
(It can't be true, of course,
That they've merely prunes in sauce).

Valentine

My simple wishes
Don't embrace exotic dishes—
Give me
BRIE !

Guy Innes

Any housewife'll
Tell you a TRIFLE
Is, when prepared at home, a
Misnomer.

L. V. Upward

The fastidious η
Swears there's nothing to β
Sturgeon's ρ—though it's not an ι
Better than bloater.

E. V. Milner

I don't know if La Financière
Was dark or fair,
But it does rather look
As if Rothschild had married his cook.

All the same, Truites Meunière
Show clearly (I'll swear)
That the miller's wife
Gave him a happier life.

Yorick

Stew veal in milk and you get
Blanquette.
And who can refuse
Such stews ?

Willy Tadpole

" Les petits Croutons diablés d'Afrique ? "
" Magnifique ! "
" Et—les Crêpes Suzette ? "
" Saperlipopette ! "

William Bliss

Our Christmas Dinner
This year was a winner,
But when I think of three-sixty-four more days of
plain hospital grub—
There's the rub !

R. E. Austen

Anyone even alluding
To college pudding
Is suspected of impropriety
By the Food and Wine Society.

W. Stuart

SHAPESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

Trifles light as air
Are these days comparatively rare,
And the fool
Is rather bitter as a rule.

Bruce Hunt

Dull would he be of soul
Who despised toad-in-the-hole
Though its claim to descriptive accuracy is flimsy,
Sounding rather like a piece of A. A. Milne whimsy.

Shame on the nut cutlet for
Making verbal obeisance to the carnivore ;
Is this the way to prove that nuts
Breed guts ?

Stanley J. Sharpless

Apple Charlotte
Has nothing of the harlot :
If you wish to fill that part
You must order a tart.

J. R. B.

After an internment,
It shows lack of discernment
To offer the mourners dressed in black crêpe
Cold Shape.

Joyce Johnson

Salmis de Canards Sauvages
Suggests one of Goebbels' barrages
Till you learn that you are invited to pot luck
On wild duck.

Pibwob

Boil, roast or grill
Just what you will,
But it's not wise to steam
Ice-cream.

Sir Robert Witt

You can't be in a hurry
With Indian curry
But only a fool
Would wait for it to cool.

C. M. P.

When I gave Jane
Homard à l'Américaine
I scarcely expected
That even my more delicate suggestions would be
rejected.

I really think that rice
Can be quite nice
Although in my younger days
I damned it with very faint praise.

S. H.

Tipsy cake
Is mostly fake
Though I can get drunk on sherry,
Very.

A. W. Clarke

PETS DE NONNE

Quant aux Pets de Nonne,
Je conseille qui s'y adonnent,
De ne pas traduire littéralement ce terme plutôt cru,
En Angleterre, où ce ne serait pas bien vu.

G. R.

I can face sour milk
In the shape of umbrellas, or artificial silk,
But I definitely funk it
As junket.

Frankie Stanley

CONTINENTAL CUISINE

Tournedos Rossini
Might appeal to Toscanini,
But most Englishmen prefer
A Tournedos Chasseur.

John Irvine

Whenever I see some boiled cod
" God,"
I say, again and again,
" Why did that fish have to die in vain ? "

T. R. L.

" Pêche Melba,
And then—Elba ! "
This saying of Napoleon's, though characteristic,
Was anachronistic.

Welsh rarebit
Is just a British harebit,
Whereas rice
Is a Japanese vice.

L. E. J.

Jehoshophat
Never ate pork-&-greens, ham-&-eggs, or anything
like that.
You'd think he would have been
Jehosholean.

Piers Plowman

Could one grow bod
With smorgosbrod ?
Perhaps
If there were not Schnapps.

Olives Kalamata
And a bottle of retzinata—
Who wants to *speak*
Modern Greek ?

R. J. P. Hewison

I'd as lief chew a poker,
As a pudding of tapioca ;
Nor am I any keener
On a semolina,
While a sago
Makes me feel like a child of the Jago.

D. W. Barker

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